EARLY LITERARY THEORIES IN TAMIL

Dr. G. Sundaramoorthy

SARVODAYA ILAKKIYA PANNAI

EARLY LITERARY THEORIES IN TAMIL
(in comparison with Sanskrit theories)

R. SHANMUGAM
M.A., M. LITT., DIP. ANTHROP (MADRAS)
M.A. LINGUISTICS (CORNELL UNIV., U. S. A.)
Reader in Dravidian Languages
Department of Languages,
MADURAI UNIVERSITY,
MADURAI 2. (India.)

Early

LITERARY THEORIES

In Tamil

(In comparison with Sanskrit theories)

Dr. G. Sundaramoorthy

With a Foreword
by

Dr. M. VARADARAJAN, M.A., M.O.L., Ph. D., D.Litt.,
Vice-Chancellor, Madurai University

R. SHANMUGAM
M.A., M. LITT., DIP. ANTHROP (MADRAS)
M.A. LINGUISTICS (CORNELL UNIV., U. S. A.)
Reader in Dravidian Languages
Department of Languages,
MADURAI UNIVERSITY,
MADURAI 2. (India.)

Sarvodaya Ilakkiya Pannai
32/1 West Veli Street
Madurai-625001
INDIA

Price : Rs. 22/-
Outside India U. S. $ 3

Selling rights : Sarvodaya Ilakkiya Pannai

Printed in India at Sangam Printers 625001

tasmai śrī gurave namaḥ



FOREWORD

Dr. G. Sundaramoorthy, Reader in Sanskrit, Madurai University has herein interpreted some important portions of the early extant Tamil Work Tolkappiyam and clearly brought out the early literary theories in Tamil. He has aptly made a comparative study of the theories of Tolkappiyam with the literary theories in Sanskrit. His interpretations are all on sound basis and his exposition is original and instructive.

He explains the two themes in Tamil 'agam' and 'puram' and points out the silence of Tolkappiyanar in regard to the necessity of story in literature. He has carefully studied the important commentaries on this great work Tolkappiyam and deals with the three aspects of agam and the themes of clandestine love and married life. The themes of heroic life and ethical and

philosophical attitudes are also adequately explained. The chapter 'Meyppadu' in Tolkappiyam is a very important one and the author has given due importance to it in this critical work. Speeches which are mere expressions of inner thought and emotional outbursts of feelings are well distinguished. He compares the theories of Tolkappiyanar with those of Anandavardhana and rightly points out that it is wonderful to see that the former had recognized many important ideas of literature 1200 years before the latter. His explanations of the theory of suggestion in poetry and the principle of propriety as found in Tolkappiyam deserve appreciation.

This book is a very important contribution to the history of literary theories of India and through this the author has rendered unique service to the field.

MADURAI-21

M. VARADARAJAN,
Vice-Chancellor, Madurai University.

29-1-1974

PREFACE

In spite of the fact that Poruladhikaram of Tolkappiyam contains many remarkable and useful literary ideas, the non-Tamils have not been given an opportunity to understand its greatness fully mainly due to the fact that the eminent and competent scholars have somehow missed to introduce it properly to the non-Tamils. The Proceedings of the First International Conference Seminar of Tamil Studies, Vol. II (abbreviation used in this book: P. F. C. T. S.) contains a few articles covering some aspects of Early Literary Theories in Tamil. But a full knowledge of the subject cannot be obtained from these articles.

There are three English translations of the Poruladhikaram. Of them, the English translation by Professor P. S. Subrahmanya Sastry alone seems to be satisfactory. In this book this translation has been used in many places for which I express my thanks to this Professor. It may be mentioned in this connection that a non-Tamil will not be able to appreciate the ideas of Poruladhikaram by merely studying the translation. The major part of the difficulty lies in the way in which the literary theories have been treated by Tolkappiyar. The treatment of the subject is peculiar to Tamil tradition and those who are not familiar with this will not be able to know the value of Poruladhikaram.

A non-Tamil Indian literary student would normally be conversant with the following topics in any work on literary criticism. 1. The purpose, aim and the theme of literature. 2. The equipment of the poet. 3. The role and the various aspects of the word and the meaning. 4. The several types of literary forms. 5. The style and the qualities. 6. The Figures of Speech. 7. The soul of literature. 8. The literary techniques. 9. Propriety and 10. Literary blemishes.

The non-Tamils who are trained to View the subject like this will find it difficult to grasp the ideas of Poruladhikaram whose chapter divisions are completely different from these. Therefore it becomes absolutely necessary to introduce Poruladhikaram in the way familiar to the non-Tamils. I have tried my best to present the subject keeping this need in view. As this is the first attempt along these lines I earnestly invite useful suggestions from competent scholars.

Although this book deals with the ideas of Poruladhikaram, I have chosen the title Early Literary Theories in Tamil for the following reason. The literary ideas contained in Poruladhikaram do not represent the individual views of Tolkappiyar alone. Tolkappiyar uses very often the words 'enba' 'enmanar pulavar' etc. and thereby suggests that he incorporates the ideas of his contemporaries and predecessors. Therefore the title of this book may be said to remain justified.

I would also like to point out here that I am aware of the view prevalent among some scholars that Poruladhikaram contains some interpolations. But that is a vexing question and we have no definite

method to sift the original from the spurious. For the purpose of this work I have ignored the question of interpolations in Poruladhikaram.

I have been tempted to compare the early literary views of the Tamils with the Sanskrit views for obvious reasons. In making this comparison I have tried to be impartial and critical.

In spite of my extreme care and watch, some negligible printing mistakes have crept in and some of them were detected at the last stage while some copies had already been printed. If this copy happens to be the one in which some of the mistakes remain uncorrected, I modestly request my readers to have them corrected as and when they come across them. I hope my readers will not mind this. On page 169, line 18, it may please be corrected as 'called in Tamil Seyirriyanar' instead of 'called in Tamil Jeyirriyanar'.

I am immensely indebted to Prof. Dr. M. Varadarajanar, M. A., M. O. L., Ph. D., D. Litt., for his valuable foreword which has brought a new status and value to this book.

Prof. T. Kodandaramiah, Professor of Telugu, Madurai University has always been a source of inspiration to me. Dr. P. S. Srinivasa, Reader in Kannada, Madurai University, Dr. C. J. Roy, Director of Malayalam, Madurai University and Mr. G. Vijaya Venugopal, Lecturer in Tamil, Madurai University have given me encouragement to write this book. My thanks are due to them.

Mr. T. R. Damodaran, M. A., a Ph. D. research student with me and Mr. K. Vijayakumar, my nephew have helped me greatly and I thank them for all their

help. Mr. S. Jagadisan, M. A. helped me to prepare the index and I thank him. It is really delicate to thank my wife who helped me in typing the script, reading the proofs and preparing the index and bibliography. My thanks are due to Mr. V. Balakrishnan, owner of Sangam Printers and the workers of the press for taking a special interest in this book.

MADURAI–2

31-1-1974

G. SUNDARAMOORTHY.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER

1

Introduction

Tolkāppiyam is the earliest work available in Tamil. The author of this work is Tolkāppiyar about whom many stories seem to have been current in ancient Tamilnadu[1] but none appears to be really informative or useful to the serious student of history or literature. Tolkāppiyam is a work on grammar and poetics including prosody. It is divided into three major parts namely Eḻuttadhikāram which deals with phonology, Śolladhikāram which deals with morphology and Poruḷadhikāram which deals with matter or sense to be dealt with in poetry or literature.

One may wonder as to why a work on grammar should be concerned with poetics and prosody which do not come under grammar in its strict sense. One explanation for this will be that it was the custom

---

1. Many such stories seem to have been current in Tamilnadu from very early days. These stories connect him with Agastya and Indra both of whom have been credited with the authorship of two grammar works. These stories are believed by many ancient Tamil literary authorities including some of the commentators of Tolkāppiyam. It is also not known whether the name Tolkāppiyar is his original name or assumed one. The religion of Tolkāppiyar is also not definite even though some take him to be a Jain. For details of these problems see K. Vellaivaranan, A History of Tamil Literature: Tolkāppiyam pp. 1–86. See also S. Vaiyapuri Pillai, Tamil Cuḍar manigal, pp. 17–54

in ancient Tamil tradition to treat these subjects as integral parts of grammar. But it may also be pointed out that the grammarians are in a way justified in dealing with poetics and prosody which regulate the sense and style of language. The letters and words exist really for the sense and style of language and therefore a work on grammar becomes comprehensive only when it contains prescriptions on them. Somehow the grammatical works of all other languages have not considered the necessity to include poetics and prosody in normal grammar works.

In the Sanskrit tradition too these subjects have been held to be falling outside the scope of normal grammar. But grammar has been intimately connected with poetics in the Sanskrit tradition. From a reference in the Kāvyālaṅkāra of Bhāmaha (I, 14) which is one of the earliest authoritative works on Sanskrit poetics, we can understand that before the time of Bhāmaha the worth of poetry was mainly judged by the extent of its grammatical correctness. Bhāmaha claims that he tries to change the method of judgement by introducing many figures of speech which bring about the appeal in poetry. But the fact that Bhāmaha himself devotes an entire chapter on grammar in his Kāvyālaṅkāra proves that even he could not come away from the old method of relating poetics and grammar. [2]

Soon in the Tamil tradition also the old method of treating poetics and prosody as part and parcel of grammar was given up. Separate works on prosody

---

2. G. Vijayavardhana, Outlines of Sanskrit Poetics, p. 8.

and rhetorics were written in Tamil deviating from the Tolkāppiyam tradition. [3]

The entire Tolkāppiyam is in the form of sūtras. The total number of sūtras now available in the editions of Tolkāppiyam is roughly 1610. The part dealing with phonology has 483 sūtras and is divided into nine iyals or chapters. Morphology part contains 462 sūtras distributed into nine chapters. The part concerning matter or sense which also is of nine chapters has 665 sūtras. The number of sūtras may vary in some editions because the commentators at times split the sūtras into two or read two sūtras as one. [4] In this work we are concerned only with Poruḷadhikāram.

It is necessary to pause here a little to make an observation on the concept of sūtra as held by the Tamil tradition. [5] Tolkāppiyar himself defines the sūtra in two places in Poruḷadhikāram. According to one definition (649) [6] the sūtra is one which summarizes, elaborates, summarizingly elaborates and translates. The sūtra is to contain the minimum number of syllables, to be in the form of a verse, to be capable of being

---

3. For example, Yāpparungalam (11th century) Daṇḍiyalaṅkāram (12th century).

4. According to Ilampūraṉar Poruladhikāram contains 656 sūtras. Pērāśiriyar seems to have 665 sūtras. As the Nacciṉārkkiṉiyar's commentary is only upto the 5th chapter of Poruladhikāram we are unable to decide how many sūtras he has totally. Upto the 5th chapter he has 247 sūtras whereas Ilampūraṉar has 243 sūtras. Professor P. S. S. Sastri has 659 sūtras. In this work we have followed the number given by this Professor.

5. In Sanskrit the definition of sūtra is as follows: It should be of very little letters, it should be distinct, it should contain the essence, it should be capable of various meanings, it should be without pause and it should be defectless.

6. The bracketed numbers refer to the serial number of sūtras as given by P. S. S. Sastri.

commented upon, to be terse and unambiguous, to be tacked on to others that follow, to be rich in meaning and to be of use in many ways. He also defines it (472) as a verse whose meaning is so clear as the image in a metallic mirror that it can be understood without serious thinking. The sūtras in Tolkāppiyam contain minimum one line and maximum sixty lines or above.

In spite of Tolkāppiyar's definition that the sūtras should be capable of being understood without any or much trouble, some words in many sūtras and sometimes the entire sūtras themselves have become completely or partially unintelligible to us. The fault is not on Tolkāppiyar who used the simple words that were current in his times. Most of the words and even some types of sentence-constructions employed by Tolkāppiyar went out of use after the Tolkāppiyam period. Not only the words but even the entire pattern and style of Tamil literature became wholly different after this period. To add to all these difficulties no earlier commentary on Tolkāppiyam has so far been discovered. The earliest commentary available now cannot be dated before the 11th century after Christ. The commentator who writes a commentary after a long interval cannot be expected to be of complete satisfaction.

One may be curious to know as to why the Tolkāppiyam tradition was broken in Tamilnadu. In answering this question we have to discuss in somewhat detail the age of Tolkāppiyam and the early history of Tamilnadu. These are elaborate and complicated problems and in a work like this we cannot enter into the intricacies of this problem. At the same time we cannot avoid discussing the problem even superficially.

Those who are interested in knowing the details of complications involved in the problem of the age of Tolkāppiyam may have to refer to standard works discussing this question elaborately.[7] Only salient features of this problem can be shown here.

The question of the date of Tolkāppiyam is closely associated with the age of the Śaṅgam litereature with which the known history of the Tamils begins. The style, diction and the subject-matter of the Śaṅgam literature are in close relationship with the parallels found in Tolkāppiyam. Tolkāppiyam cannot be separated from the Śaṅgam period beyond certain number of years either prior to the Śaṅgam age or posterior to it. Either the Śaṅgam works fashioned their contents and forms as prescribed by Tolkāppiyar or Tolkāppiyar drew inspiration from the Śaṅgam works to formulate his literary theories. The scholars are normally inclined to assign a predate to Tolkāppiyam. According to them many grammatical rules prescribed by Tolkāppiyam are violated in the Śaṅgam works and if Tolkāppiyar had succeeded the Śaṅgam works he would have either attempted to justify the peculiar usages of the Śaṅgam period or he would not have prescribed the rules prohibiting such usages. This argument appears to be sound and acceptable.[8]

What then would be the age of the Śaṅgam? There are scholars[9] who would put forward fanciful dates and

---

7. A detailed discussion on the age of the Śaṅgam may be found in N. Subrahmanian, History of Tamilnad, pp. 39–91.

8. K. Vellaivaranan, op. cit. p. 89f.

9. K. Vellaivaranan thinks that the age of Tolkāppiyam is 5320 B. C. See his work cited above, p. 105f.

such dates may not be taken to be serious. Even among the standard historians there is difference in delimiting the age of the Śaṅgam. The Śaṅgam literature which is a collection of works, was not created by the poets belonging to the same period. At least some generations of poets have contributed to the Śaṅgam works and therefore at least two to three hundred years will have to be given between the upper and lower limits of the Śaṅgam period.

Anyway, some historians are inclined to hold the view that the period of the Śaṅgam might be from the 6th century B. C. to A. D. 5th century.[10] If at all the Śaṅgam period is brought to the Christian era, it cannot be brought later than the beginning of the 4th century after Christ. There are some reasons to conclude like this. The Kaḷabhras who were not Tamil kings were virtually in command of the entire Tamil country between c. A.D. 250 and c. A.D. 600.[11] From the time of the earliest known Pallava king, Simhaviṣṇu, who ruled in Tamilnadu from c.A.D. 575-600 the history of Tamilnadu is fairly known. The Pāṇḍya line also began to rule Tamilnadu from c.A.D. 600.[12] Therefore the political history[13] as revealed by the Śaṅgam works will not be fitting in with the trends of the general history known to us from beginning of the 7th century A.D. The diction, form and

10. N. Subrahmanian, History of Tamilnad, p. 39. See also M. Varadarajan, Tamil Ilakkiya Varalāṟu, p. 24.

11. N. Subrahmanian, History of Tamilnad, p. 98.

12. Ibid.

13. An account of the political history of the Tamils may be seen in N. Subrahmanian, History of Tamilnad, Chapter VI. For a detailed account of the social and other history of the Śaṅgam age see N. Subrahmanian, Śaṅgam Polity and K. A. Nilakantha Sastry, The Śaṅgam Age.

content of the literature produced during the Pallava period are completely different from the Śaṅgam works. From the middle of the 3rd century A.D. to the end of the 6th century A.D. Tamilnadu, as stated previously, was under the rule of the Kaḷabhras. Therefore the Śaṅgam works cannot be assigned to this period also.

In this connection we may have to take into consideration the fact that the epic period of the Tamils intervened the Śaṅgam and the Pallava periods. From various external and internal proofs supplied by Śilappadhikāram, one of the important Tamil epics, the epic period of the Tamils may be assigned to the 2nd century A.D.[14] Therefore the Śaṅgam period can be safely assigned a date prior to 2nd century A.D. The present writer has demonstrated in his paper entitled the 'Age of the Paripāḍal as revealed by its Viṣṇu Mythology'[15] that the Śaṅgam works may be assigned to the 3rd or 2nd century B.C. Hence the early and the later limits of the Śaṅgam period can be taken to be the 4th century B.C. and the 1st or 2nd century A.D. Tolkāppiyam which is earlier to the present Śaṅgam works can thus be assigned to the 4th or 3rd century B.C.

In this context we have to make a note of the date of Bharata who was the earliest Sanskrit authority on poetics and dramaturgy. There are scholars who would wish to take Bharata to the early centuries

---

14. A brief discussion on the age of the Tamil epics may be found in N. Subrahmanian, History of Tamilnad, p. 43f.

15. Read before the Madurai Historical Society. The paper is to be published soon.

before Christ.[16] Even if Bharata is accepted to belong to the early eras before Christ, Tolkāppiyar seems to be the earliest Indian authority in this field.

We will now probe into the cause that created a break of Tolkāppiyam and the Śaṅgam tradition in Tamilnadu. Historians agree that Tamilnadu was enjoying the rule of the three Tamil kings namely Choḷa, Cēra and Pāṇḍya till the middle of the 3rd century A.D. We have already remarked that Tamilnadu came under the sway of the Kaḷabhras from c. A.D. 300-600. According to Professor N. Subrahmanian it was this Kaḷabhra rule in Tamilnadu that broke the Śaṅgam tradition.[17] He feels that the Kaḷabhra rule might have been barbaric and they might have destroyed the best in Tamilnadu. This appears to be very true although we do not know how far the Kaḷabhras were barbaric. However, to destroy the best of Tamil culture should have been a tremendous job for the Kaḷabhras but it is not known why the Kaḷabhras should have been so against the Śaṅgam culture.

But there is one benefit in the rule of the Kaḷabhras. After they created a void in the culture of the people of Tamilnadu by their 'barbaric' ideas, the Tamils became very emotional and religious after the end of Kaḷabhra rule. And that was the secret of origin and

---

16. For a full discussion on the age of Bharata see P. V. Kane, History of Sanskrit Poetics, p. 41ff. Manomohan Ghosh thinks that Bharata may be assigned to the 2nd century B. C. See his introduction to his edition of Nāṭya Śāstra, Section 35.

17. History of Tamilnad, p. 99. An account of the Kalabhras and the problems relating to them are given in this work (Chapter VII).

quick popularity of the Bhakti movement in Tamilnadu in the Pallava period.[18]

The Śaṅgam culture and literature went to the background following the Kaḷabhra suppression and the upsurge of the Bhakti movement. But fortunately the study of these neglected Śaṅgam works should have been continued and alive in some Tamil families. These families should have patiently waited for the revival of the Śaṅgam tradition. The appreciation and the study of the Śaṅgam works including Tolkāppiyam might have been passed on to the next generation most probably by oral tradition. After sometime the need for a written appreciation and explanation should have been very acutely felt by those interested in the study of these works. To fulfil the most urgently and vehemently needed purpose some commentators appeared here and there in Tamilnadu in the mediaeval ages and they were the saviours of ancient Tamil tradition. Without them the entire block of ancient Tamil literature would have either been completely lost or become wholly unintelligible.

In an absolutely needy hour the Śaṅgam commentators began to appear on the scene from the 11th century A. D. onwards. Tolkāppiyam being the only extant ancient Tamil grammar the commentators were naturally interested in it. Fortunately many commentaries written by several scholars on Tolkāppiyam are preserved for us from the 11th centrury onwards. Iḷampūraṇar, Śēnāvaraiyar, Pērāśiriyar, Naccinārkkiniyar, Daivaccilaiyār and Kallāḍar are the scholars who

18. See for details T. P. Meenakshisundaran, A History of Tamil Literature, pp. 65–82.

have commented upon Tolkāppiyam.[19] Of these, some have commented only on Eḻuttadhikāram, some only on Śolladhikāram and some on Poruḷadhikāram. Some seem to have commented on the whole of Tolkāppiyam but those complete commentaries are not available excepting one. Iḷampūraṇar, Pērāśiriyar and Naccinār-kkiṉiyar are the three scholars who have commented on Poruḷadhikāram. Iḷampūraṇar's name occupies the most important place in the history of Tolkāppiyam commentators.[20] Two reasons may be assigned to this: 1. He is the earliest available commentator. 2. His is the only commentary available for the entire Tolkāppiyam.

The date of Iḷampūraṇar may be determined with some degree of certainty. In his commentary Iḷampūraṇar quotes from some Tamil works whose date has been known as the 11th century A. D. Iḷampūraṇar is being quoted by some Tamil works which belong to the 13th century A. D. Thus the date of Iḷampūraṇar may be assigned to the centuries between 11 and 13. Most probably he belongs to the 11th century.

It is difficult to know anything about the personal life of this commentator. Neither he nor other works give any clue in this regard. What is known about his personal life is based on oral or less authoritative sources. There is a stray verse on Iḷampūraṇar which contains some remarks on his personal life. How far the authority of this verse may be accepted cannot be

19. For an account of the commentators see M. Arunachalam, Tamil Ilakkiya Varalāṟu, under relevant centuries. See also M. V. Aravindan, Uraiyāśiriyargal.

20. The account on Ilampūraṉar given here is based on the works cited in reference 19.

decided. According to this verse he belonged to a place named Sellur on the eastern seacoast of Tamilnadu. He was a brahmin and a learned man in Tamil and Vedic tradition. There is another tradition in which Iḷampūraṇar is said to be a non-Hindu perhaps a Jain. The basis of this belief seems to be Iḷampūraṇar's acquaintance with the Jain tradition. Just because one knows about another tradition one cannot be taken to belong to that tradition. Thus the personal history of this commentator remains unknown. Iḷampūraṇar seems to have commented on two other works besides Tolkāppiyam.

Iḷampūraṇar's name will be remembered with gratitude by all lovers of Tamil for the reason that he was perhaps the first writer to comment on Tolkāppiyam. His commentary served as an inspiration to others to attempt more commentaries on this work. The difficulties which Iḷampūraṇar comes across as a commentator of Tolkāppiyam are many. By his time most of the words and traditions represented in Tolkāppiyam have lost their currency in Tamil. He could not consult anyone except the oral tradition which at times will mislead. Under the circumstances the responsibilities of Iḷampūraṇar obtain full proportion. Yet Iḷampūraṇar tries his best to justify his role as a commentator. By nature he likes to be as brief as possible but in some cases he remains too brief and merely repeats the words found in the Tolkāppiyam sūtras. This puts us in difficult position to understand the real significance and meaning of the sūtras. Sometimes he gives many alternatives to one word and leaves the choice to us, a very responsible job to execute. At times the reading adopted by

Iḷampūraṇar entirely differs from the other commentators and we are unable to decide the original word.

Although he writes briefly, his sentences convey a flood of ideas. His language is simple and has a direct appeal to us. He gives a useful and brief introduction at the beginning of each chapter which beautifully serves its purpose. He exhibits his vast knowledge in ancient and contemporary Tamil literature. He chooses appropriate stanzas from the Śaṅgam literature to illustrate the sūtras. Sometimes he takes pains to search for rare illustrations from the Śaṅgam literature and the later commentators had to repeat only his illustration. Otherwise the sūtras would perhaps remain unillustrated.

It seems that Iḷampūraṇar has more intimacy with Tamil language and tradition than with Sanskrit tradition. This helps him to stick to Tamil tradition and keeps him to be away from forcing foreign traditions on the comparatively independent Tamil works of the past. The commentary of Iḷampūraṇar helps us to know the beliefs and practices of his time. The fact that Iḷampūraṇar has chosen to comment on the language and literature sections of Tolkāppiyam shows that he is equally interested in the study of language and literature. As he is the earliest and only commentator who has written a complete commentary he is very often called Uraiyāśiriyar meaning 'the commentator'.

The other commentator who has commented on Poruḷadhikāram is Pērāśiriyar.[21] There are many

21. I am indebted to the works cited in 19 for the sketch on Pērāśiriyar

commentators by the name Pērāśiriyar and the question of their identity is vexing. It is not known whether Pērāśiriyar is his real name or assumed name. Unfortunately the whole commentary of Pērāśiriyar on Poruḷadhikāram is not available now. Only for the later four chapters his commentary is preserved. There is evidence to hold from his own remarks and from the remarks made by Naccinārkkiniyar, that he wrote commentary for the entire Poruḷadhikāram. We are unable to know whether he wrote commentary on Eḻuttadhikāram and Śolladhikāram. Perhaps he was more interested in literature than in language.

The date of Pērāśiriyar may be determined with the help of some literary evidences. In his commentary Pērāśiriyar quotes from the Tamil works belonging to the 12th century. Pērāśiriyar is being quoted by another commentator of Poruḷadhikāram, Naccinārkkiniyar, who may be assigned to the 15th century A.D. This will help to fix the date of Pērāśiriyar as belonging to the centuries between 13 and 15.

Regarding the personal life of Pērāśiriyar nothing is known. From the trend of his commentary it may be guessed that he must have been a staunch Hindu, perhaps a brahmin, with unquestionable leaning towards Vedic religion. Pērāśiriyar remarkably combines in him the best of Tamil and Sanskrit traditions. His deep and close knowledge of both the traditions helps him to interpret many difficult portions of Poruḷadhikāram. He makes it a point to elaborate those portions which Iḷampūraṇar has left half-interpreted. This serves as a very useful addition to Iḷampūraṇar. Pērāśiriyar is normally interested to write in detail of whatever he writes on. He seems to be very much interested in

preserving the purity of ancient Tamil tradition. Some of his remarks on textual criticism are worthy of appreciation.

Pērāśiriyar very often differs from the reading of Iḷampūraṉar and he also differs from the interpretations offered by Iḷampūraṉar. Wherever he prefers to differ he does it politely. Pērāśiriyar has considerable influence on Nacciṉārkkiṉiyar, another commentator of Poruḷadhikāram. The latter seems to have the former as his ideal to write his commentary. In diction, style, appropriate quotations and subtle remarks Pērāśiriyar has a prominent place among commentators. His commentary remains as a fine specimen of prose style of his time.

The third commentator whose commentary on Poruḷadhikāram is available to us is Nacciṉārkkiṉiyar.[22] His commentary on the first five chapters and his commentary on the chapter on Prosody are available to us. His commentary on the remaining chapters of Poruḷadhikāram could not be traced so far. In the history of Tamil commentators Nacciṉārkkiṉiyar occupies a very significant place for the main reason that he has commented on almost all the Śaṅgam works and on one of the Tamil epics namely Jīvaka-cintāmaṇi. No other single person has to his credit so many commentaries in Tamil.

The date of Nacciṉārkkiṉiyar is no problem to us. From his mention of the earlier commentators whose date has been determined and from his mention of the

---

22. I am indebted to the works cited above and also M. Rajamanikkam, Pattuppāṭṭu Ārāychi, pp. 765–781.

Tamil Lexicon the date of which is the 14th century, we may assign the date of Naccinārkkiniyar to the early part of the 15th century.

Some details about the personal life of Naccinārkkiniyar are available to us. On the basis of these references we may assume that he lived in Madurai as a teacher belonging to the brahmin caste and Bhāradvāja gotra. At the end of his commentary to each chapter on Poruḷadhikāram he mentions that he belonged to the Bhāradvāja gotra. He seems to be a Śaivite and he is fond of quoting from Tamil Śaivite works. He very often attempts to praise the Śaivite religion. He seems to be an Advaitin by conviction. In spite of his leaning to Śaivism he seems to respect the other sects of Hinduism and even Buddhism and Jainism. He appears to have lived a long life and he must have spent all his life in studying the vast Tamil literature and contemplating and writing on these works. He gives evidence to possess a deep knowledge of various Sanskrit works and makes use of his acquaintance with the Sanskrit language and literature to interpret Tolkāppiyam, the Śaṅgam and other works.

Following the footsteps of Pērāśiriyar he writes fairly long annotations under each sūtra. He has profound knowledge of Tamil grammar and he very often indulges in the study of language. In spite of his reverence to Pērāśiriyar he differs from him at times. He has difference of opinion with Iḷampūraṇar and adopts in some places readings not found in Iḷampūraṇar. In some places he splits the sūtras into two which Iḷampūraṇar reads as one and vice versa. Naccinārk-

kiṉiyar very often indulges in reconstructing the words of the sūtras in a peculiar way. He sometimes gives far-fetched meanings to the sūtras. Some of his references to the purāṇic stories are strange and he does not say on what authority he bases his views.

Nacciṉārkkiṉiyar gives room in many places for being accused of reading Sanskrit thoughts in Tamil tradition. He seems to be adament in persisting his views and wants us to believe him totally. In spite of this he sometimes condemns deriving some Tamil words from Sanskrit origin.

Nacciṉārkkiṉiyar's commentary, on the whole, is very useful, informative and helpful in determining the meaning of the sūtras. He seems to hold the view that Tolkāppiyam preceded the Śaṅgam works, a view with which most of the modern scholars agree.[23] What is more amazing in Nacciṉārkkiṉiyar is his encyclopaedic knowledge. Besides his close knowledge of literature he has intimate knowledge of many religious traditions and practices. His minute knowledge of music, arts, geography and other sciences, and social customs of different people is really wonderful. The Tamil literary world is very much indebted to Nacciṉārkkiṉiyar in being a bridge between the ancient and later Tamil traditions. Without him many Śaṅgam works would have remained Greek to the Tamils.

---

23. T. P. Meenakshisundaran, A History of Tamil Language, p. 51.

CHAPTER

2

The Theme

(A) General Remarks

Any expression, oral or written, basically needs a theme. An ordinary expression may be based on any theme but the literary expression cannot have all themes as its basis. One cannot expect that the ordinary expression should always be interesting and enjoyable. But the literary expression is bound to be attractive and relishing. In order to be alluring and delightful, one should be extremely careful in selecting the theme for the literary expression. It is the proper theme that provides the ground for the entire network of literature. Any indifference in selecting the theme will always yield unwanted results and restrict the scope for the opportunity for the essential elements of literature.

One may think that if the creative writers are given complete freedom to choose their own theme to suit their convenience, they will be able to conceive a plot in such a way that it provides scope for all the essential elements of literature. In this connection it is necessary to remember what the Sanskrit authorities on this subject have warned

us.[1] According to them it is always better that the creative writers choose their subject-matter or plot from a well known story.[2] The writers may invent their own plot but that will land them in all sorts of trouble which will finally make the writing an utter failure. Unless the creative writers are exceptionally talented they cannot invent an ideal plot. Therefore it is normally safe to adopt an old popular theme.

A good theme alone cannot always guarantee a successful literary piece. Nearly thirty percent of the success of literature lies on the theme and the remaining portion of success depends on the other elements of literature. The duty of a sincere critic is to give suggestions to the best writers and to give detailed instructions to the mediocre writers.

One may doubt that if minute directions are given to the writers by the critics, all the authors will naturally follow the same prescription and finally the entire literature will be mere repetitions in many respects. This doubt may appear to be strong initially but on close examination the doubt will miss all its vigour. Just because the theme happens to be the same, it cannot become uninteresting. Even if the same writer or different writers handle the same theme, the treatment of the theme will definitely differ owing to

---

1. In Sanskrit tradition, only the drama is discussed in relation to its theme which is subjected to special analysis and prescription. The theme of poetry does not receive full attention. Daṇḍin seems to be the only author to speak something on the theme of poetry. In his Kavyādarśa (I, 14-22) Daṇḍin tells us as to how the theme of mahākāvya should be selected and handled.

2. Ānandavardhana in his Dhvanyāloka advises the poets not to be under the impression that only new themes should be striven after and that there is no virtue in writing what others have already written (4, 17). Daṇḍin also suggests that the theme should be based on the epics or on the already popular stories of the great (I, 14).

the fact that each treatment will be the product of different moods of the writer or writers.[3]

In fact, if we examine the themes of literatures belonging to all nations and of all-times, it will be discovered that all the themes can be grouped under three or four heads. But each literary piece has got its own charm and appeal being the creation of different writers. The fact is amply testified by the Śaṅgam poetry in which a small number of themes is beautifully shaped by many writers. Therefore the sameness of the theme will never be the cause of dullness.

It has to be remembered here that the conception of theme in ancient Tamil tradition differed widely from the later day conceptions. In those days the story was not considered to be essential to literature. They thought that the theme may consist of some connected or isolated interesting ideas, things, events and emotions. Therefore Tolkāppiyar never speaks of the necessity of a story in literature. His conception of theme was mainly based on the general trend of the day. The theme prescribed by Tolkāppiyar has

3. Ānandavardhana writes in detail about this in the fourth chapter of Dhvanyāloka. Some of his most important remarks may be cited here. 1. Poetic themes are rendered new by the contact of one of the aspects of suggestion. 2. The infinitude of poetic themes is brought about not only by way of suggested content but also by way of expressed content. 3. Varieties of circumstances, place, time, etc. will add new charm to old themes. 4. Even an old theme presented in a new way brings beauty. 5. Coincidence in poetic theme is of three kinds: (a) like that of a reflected image of persons, (b) like that of a painted picture of a person and (c) like that of two living persons resembling each other. A good poet should avoid the first two kinds and adopt only the third kind. 6. So long as its vital essence is present even a poetic theme similar to an earlier one will appear exceedingly beautiful.

very close resemblance to the practical incidents and emotions.[4]

Tolkāppiyar seems to divide the theme into four major heads namely Love, Heroism, Moral and Philosophical ideas, and Secular ideas.[5] All his ideas on the theme are found in the Ahattiṇai Iyal, Puṟattiṇai Iyal, Kaḷaviyal and Kaṟpiyal. The love-theme is named by him 'Aham' which means 'inner or private'. The love is mainly between two persons and meant for private experience. So, the love is termed Aham. The heroic idea, moral and philosophical ideas, and secular ideas – all these are not confined to any two individuals but they are common to all. Hence it is called 'Puṟam' which means 'outer or public'. All the themes of all the literatures of the world can be conveniently brought under Aham and Puṟam. Such a self-contained and comprehensive concept really speaks for the Tamil genius.

The theme of love is divided by Tolkāppiyar into Kaḷavu and Kaṟpu. These terms are used by Tolkāppiyar in a technical sense and it is difficult to translate them in one English word. The idea conveyed by them may be explained this way: kaḷavu describes the events and emotions of a suitable lover and lady-

---

4. "It is true that the world or society is not fully represented in Aintiṇai. But what it represents is to be seen in the world. We must accept that all the situations do not occur in the life of one set of lovers (p. 160)........What Tolkāppiyar wishes to emphasize is that Aintiṇai is a collection of isolated situations happening in the lives of lovers in general, in various circumstances and at different periods (p. 161): V. Sp. Manickam, The Tamil Concept of Love.

5. Tolkāppiyar has only two divisions of the theme one being the love theme before and after the marriage of lovers and the other the heroic theme with the mixture of some other varieties which are named by him 'puṟam'. For our purpose we have divided them into five classes.

love from the time they began to love and till they are married. Kaṟpu describes the events and emotions that take place in the married life of a man and his wife. The heroic theme which is an aspect of Puṟattiṇai describes the details of the war taking place between two kings. The moral, philosophical and secular themes have their usual meanings.

Let us now see some other general ideas which Tolkāppiyar offers on the theme. According to him the theme has, from another angle, three aspects. They are Mudaṟ poruḷ, Karup poruḷ and Urip poruḷ (3). These are again technical terms which can only be explained but not translated. Mudaṟ poruḷ consists of the land and time (4) which are the basic factors associated with anything real or imaginary. Nothing can exist or take place outside the scope of the land (space) and time. Therefore they are called mudaṟ poruḷ. In this connection it may be pointed out that according to ancient Tamil literary tradition the entire land of Tamilnadu was divided into five regions namely Mullai, Kuṟiñji, Marudam, Neydal and Pālai.[6] Why these regions are called by these names is differently explained by the commentators. Iḷampūraṇar says[7] that the regions came to be known by these names by the peculiar or popular flowers found in that region. Thus the region in which mullai flower is found in abundance is called mullai-land. The same will apply to others. There is difficulty only with reference to Pālai. Tolkāppiyar does not mention of any particular region fit to be

6. For details of these lands as described in the Śaṅgam literature see M. Varadarajan, The Treatment of Nature in Śaṅgam Literature, pp. 202-227.

7. Ilam. Com. p. 10.

named Pālai.[8] From other references it has to be understood that any region which may lose all its charm and fertility and become dry is to be termed Pālai. It is also explained that the flower 'pālai' mostly found in desert areas is the cause of this name[9] to Pālai region. It is to be known in this context that according to ancient Tamil literary tradition(5) Mullai was associated with the forest areas, Kuriñji with mountain areas, Marudam with plain lands, Neydal with coastal areas and Pālai with desert areas. The time referred to above, is divided into two aspects : big and small. The big time represents years, months, days, mornings, evenings etc., and the small time represents hours and minutes.

Karup poruḷ consists of gods, human inhabitants, animals, plants, their food etc. (19) which are normally associated with these regions. In short, karup poruḷ means the characters and the subject of description.

Urip poruḷ has not been defined or described by Tolkāppiyar.[10] From the explanations given by the commentators[11] it is understood that urip poruḷ means the particular mental states or moods of the characters. The mental states are classified into five : Iruttal (waiting anxiously for the lover or the lady - love); Puṉarci (the union of the lovers); Ūḍal (love - quarrel); Piridal (temporary separation of the lovers) and Irangal (feeling sorry for what had happened) (15).

---

8. Ibid.

9. Śilappadhikāram, Kāḍu, 64-66; Ilam. Com. p. 10

10. Urip porul is a very important concept in Tolkāppiyam but he does not offer any useful information about this. We do not know whether the sūtra defining it was lost.

11. Ilam Com. p. 16; Nac. Com. p. 37f.

Karup poruḷ i. e. the characters are classified into four or five in relation to the regions in which they are mostly found. Tolkāppiyar does not give all the details of these classifications but the commentators give them in detail.[12] All those details may not be noted here but the names of the heroes of these regions may be useful. The common name for all the heroes of mullai is Aṇṇal or Tōṉṟal; for kuṟiñji Veṟpan or Silamban; for marudam Mahiḷnan or Ūran; for neydal Seṟpan or Tuṟaivan and for pālai Mīli or Kāḷai. Similarly each mental state is associated with a particular region. Mullai is related to iruttal; Kuṟiñji with puṉarci; Marudam with ūḍal; Neydal with iraṅgal and Pālai with piridal. The main idea behind such detailed classification is that the region or the physical surrounding of man has a tremendous effect on his mental make up and the way of life.

From the above classification it should not be thought that, for example, the union of the lovers can be described as taking place only on the Kuṟiñji land and between the hero of the region and the heroine. These divisions are merely to symbolise the various aspects of love.[13]

Tolkāppiyar is very clear on this point. He says plainly that the poet can describe any mental idea as taking place in any region (13). The Śaṅgam literature

---

12, Ilam Com. p. 18f. Nac. Com. p. 45f.

13. In explaining the sūtras 13 and 14 which allow overlappings of the theme both Ilampūraṉar and Nacciṉārkkiṉiyar differ. According to the former the season alone can overlap and that urip porul will never overlap. But Nacciṉārkkiṉiyar thinks that even urip porul will overlap. Nacciṉārkkiṉiyar gives many illustrations from the Śaṅgam literature for such overlappings (p. 27ff.).

is full of such overlappings. Tolkāppiyar says in another place(20) that the characters of one region may be described as indulging in love in another region. Further he points out that even the flowers, after which the regions were named, and the birds belonging to one region, when described with reference to another region have to be considered for the time being as belonging to that region. But he cautions the writers that in such overlappings it is necessary to follow the tradition strictly.

We have mentioned about the three aspects of the theme namely mudaṟ poruḷ, karup poruḷ and urip poruḷ. Which of these is more important in literature? In answering this question the commentators do not have identical views. In Iḷampūraṇar's opinion[14] mudaṟ poruḷ is the most important element. In Naccinārkkiniyar's opinion[15] the urip poruḷ is the most significant. Iḷampūraṇar seems to attach importance to mudaṟ poruḷ for the simple fact that it is the container of all. Between the container and the contained, the contained is more important than the container. In poetry the contained is the real source of pleasure. Therefore Naccinārkkiniyar seems to be more correct.

In this context it is necessary to have a brief note on the word' tiṇai' which Tolkāppiyar uses with very important literary concepts. Both the commentators differ in explaining the word. According to Iḷampūraṇar[16] tiṇai means poruḷ i. e. padārtha.

---

14. p. 8.
15. p. 5f.
16. p. 5.

According to Naccinārkiniyar[17] it means olukkam i. e. the conduct adopted by the characters. As Tolkāppiyar uses this term in various shades of meaning it is difficult to locate the meaning exactly.

According to Tolkāppiyar the entire scheme of literature comes under seven tiṇais. They are Kaikkiḷai,[18] Mullai, Kuriñji, Marudam, Neydal, Pālai and Peruntiṇai (1).[19] The five tiṇais mentioned in the middle of the above list i. e. Mullai to Pālai represent the genuine and reciprocal love between a suitable hero and a heroine. They are often grouped together and named Aintiṇai which may be translated 'reciprocal love'.[20] Kaikkiḷai means one-sided love (mostly of the man). Peruntiṇai means forced love or inappropriate love. In literature the themes of kaikkiḷai and peruntiṇai are not generally favoured either by the poets or by the readers. They occur

---

17. p. 3.

18. Kaikkilai is defined by Tolkāppiyar as'the one suggested when a lover carried away by uncontrollable passion at the sight of an immature girl satisfies himself with the expressions that he suffers for no wrong of his and she wrongs to him on his receiving no reply from her' (52). For explanation of this sūtra vide V. Sp. Manickam, op. cit. p. 130f.

19. Peruntiṇai is defined in the following way (53): 1. Mounting up a horse made of palm stems. 2. The state of either the lover or the lady-love having passed the stage of youth. 3. The state of forgetting oneself through extreme passion and 4. Their union in that state. For explanation of this vide V. Sp. Manickam, op. cit. p. 138ff.

20. V. Sp. Manickam rightly points out that if the Aintiṇai concept is accepted then the division of tiṇais into seven becomes meaningless. In that case the tiṇais should be counted as three namely Kaikkilai, Aintiṇai and Peruntiṇai. (See his work cited above p. 21). It seems that the five tiṇais came to be known as Aintiṇai only on the basis of their contents. Although the five tiṇais are common in describing the reciprocal love there is a vast difference among them in representing the important aspects of the reciprocal love. In order to emphasize on each of these aspects of mutual love Tolkāppiyar speaks of them as separate tiṇais.

very rarely. Tolkāppiyar mentions them only to complete the scheme of literature.

(B) The Theme of Love

As it has been explained, kaḷavu is the term used by Tolkāppiyar to denote the theme of love. There is a separate chapter in Tolkāppiyam under this title in which the love - theme is treated in detail. We will now see the details of the love - theme as given in Tolkāppiyam.[21]

A youth and a girl by the mysterious command of the fate[22] meet together in a proper setting. Both are of agreeable age, status etc. (269). Tolkāppiyar believes that they are lovers not only in this birth but in the previous births too. They will continue to be so in future births also (90). In this connection an interesting point in the Indian conception of theme may be pointed out. According to Sanskrit as well as Tamil tradition the lovers are destined to be lovers. Once their love is recognised they are bound to be married at the end. Therefore the question of lovers dying without being united as husband and wife does not arise in Indian literature. This is the main reason that in India

---

21. For a detailed account of the Tamil Concept of Love see V. Sp. Manickam, op. cit.

22. Tolkāppiyar seems to be a strong believer in the theory of karma. While speaking about the love-meeting of the lovers there is no necessity to mention about the fate. But Tolkāppiyar wants to stress that there is no accident in love-affairs too.

there is no tragedy in the real sense of the word.[23] There may be difficult situations for the lovers but they always end in their marriage. Hence it is no wonder that Tolkāppiyar also believes in this tradition.

The hero looks at the heroine directly.[24] He sees before him a girl with all beautiful elements combined in one. She is so highly charming that for a moment the hero doubts whether the girl standing before him is a human being or divine (91). He sees her more closely. He could see her wearing only earthly ornaments. The garland she wears is slightly withered.[25]

---

23. This statement needs some more explanation. Tolkāppiyar does not allow the description of the death of lovers or any other characters and the consequent lament over the loss in the aham theme. Therefore tragedy in the real sense of the word has no scope here. But as we have explained in a subsequent section of this chapter Tolkāppiyar is at his heart more interested in preaching the lesson that the human life has no intrinsic value in it. To teach this ideal the description of the death of wife or husband will be more ideal. Therefore he provides scope for such descriptions in puṟattiṇai. For example he allows the description of the death of husband and the lamentation over it by the wife in the sūtra 76 and even the death of the wife (76). These are merely aspects of tragedy and they cannot be held to be a complete tragedy. See also the remarks by V. Sp. Manickam, op. cit. p. 154f.

24. For the sake of a systematic summary we have given here the story of the lovers in its logical order. But nowhere in the Śaṅgam literature one will find a long poem describing the incidents taking place in the life of lovers in their logical order. In the entire Śaṅgam literature what we find is many isolated pieces of poems describing entire story of the lovers in different unconnected poems. If we arrange these verses in a required order we will get the story of the lovers in its proper order. What is more strange is that even in comparatively long poems such as Ainkuṟunūṟu the kalavu and kaṟpu themes are not described from beginning to end. Only in the kōvai literatures which are late in time we get the love theme described from beginning to end. See also the remarks by V. Sp. Manickam, op. cit. p. 162 f.

25. From many references in Tolkāppiyam we may find that every character is associated with one garland or the other. In accordance with the nature of the occasion and some other factors each will wear a different garland. In war too, they wear garlands made of certain flowers. M. Raghava Iyangar in his Poruladhikāra Ārāychi (p. 113) remarks that the Tamil custom of wearing garlands is noted even by Vālmiki in his Ayodhyā kāṇḍa Sarga (93). Therefore it seems to be an historical fact and not merely a literary tradition. He also points out that in the western tradition too each flower is associated with a particular ideal or state of mind. Thus Lilly is symbolic of chastity. The flower 'Forget-me-not' represents separation and the flower 'Weeping-willow' means extreme sorrow. Similarly the ancient Tamils employed the symbolism of flowers such as mullai etc. to represent the feeling of expectation etc. (Footnote on p. 31)

The bees are flying around the garland to taste the flower - honey. She has paintings on her body in the usual human way. She has fickle eyes and she winks. A slight tremer could be noticed in her. These make him conclude that she is a human girl (92).

She cannot ignore the fact that a youth is closely observing her with passion. She indirectly sees him. Both the eyes meet and assure to each other that they are lovers (93). Both converse with each other with their eyes. Both understand their feelings with the help of their eyes. The meeting of their eyes is really the meeting of their hearts (94). Now both have become each other's property. Both of them have obtained the right to have physical union. She would very much like to enjoy his physical company but her natural shyness and other feminine qualities dissuade her to do so (96). Her passion is checked by her modesty. The hero also is very much interested in the sexual act. But he thinks of the world which would blame him for such acts (95). Therefore they wend their way without speaking even a single word.

Both could not wait till they see each other next time. Both feel the intensity of separation. Both wish to be in each other's company. The intensity of separation induces them to think of the other constantly. The heroine is not interested in taking food and has no desire to sleep. Every object before them appears to be the lover to the heroine and the lady - love, to the hero. Some heroines go to the extent of swooning (97).

The next day also they meet at the same place. Yesterday they conversed only with their eyes and to-day they wish to speak a lot. She wants to pour out

her feelings but she is unable to do that due to her being a modest girl (116). She came with the intention of speaking for hours but now she has lost all her capacity to speak and she has become virtually a dumb. He also finds it too difficult to talk but he is in a better position than her. He can try to talk to her. He has not yet got enough strength to face her directly and talk. So he adopts a device to speak to her. He talks what all he wants to speak to her with a bee flying before him or to some other inanimate objects (98). She knows that he intends speaking to her. She understands how deeply he loves her. This makes her love him doubly.

Yet she has a doubt whether this man loves her sincerely or he wants to play with her life. He smells her doubt (98) and therefore assures her repeatedly that the love he has for her does not belong to the present birth only. It started with their previous births and will continue in their future births too. So there is no question of separation. Even if there be separation it will be only for a short period. This temporary separation too will not be bearable to him. His firm words make her take him into confidence.

The hero is now certain that he has won her confidence. Therefore he goes very near to her and touches her limbs gently under various pretexts (99). She very much likes his touching her but her modesty blocks the way. She politely indicates this to him. He is now very passionate and feels sorry that she refuses to be touched by him (109). He pours his feelings gently but forcibly. He says that he cannot live without touching her. The heroine now understands that the lover cannot be patient any more. In order

to help him she gradually leaves her shyness. He quenches his passion and leaves her for the day assuring that there is no separation for them.[26]

He wants to meet her the next day also. Sometimes the meeting will occur without any impediment. At times it will be obstructed. So the hero will go to the place where his lady-love is playing with her friends. He will see her from a hidden place. He will have to be satisfied with that (109).

The hero's friend understands that there is some change in his friend and speaks to him. When he is told of the new love-affair he advises him to mind his usual work forgetting her. The hero pathetically explains his position. Now the hero's friend decides to help him and somehow arranges their meeting (99).

The next day also the hero wants to meet her secretly. He knows that his friend will not help him to-day. So he meets the lady-love's friend and requests her to arrange for the meeting (99). He convinces the lady-love's friend that he is sincere. He tries to please her by giving some presents. First the friend refuses to accept the presents but finally she agrees to accept them. She explains to him the various difficulties standing in their way. She says that there are watchers who will stop him from meeting her. The hero explains to her that the lady-love will undergo a lot of trouble if she does not meet him. The lady-love's friend after

---

26. The question whether the lovers are allowed to have sexual union before marriage is not very clear in Tolkāppiyam. But from some of the proofs adduced by the Śaṅgam poetry we may guess that they had this union. For a lively discussion on this see V. Sp. Manickam, op. cit. p. 31 f.

a long hesitation and understanding their mental agony arranges for their meeting (207).

The meeting of the lovers may take place either in the daytime or during the night (128). They will meet at a previously selected place which will not be very far-off from the house of the lady-love (129, 130). If it is decided to meet her at night the hero will go to the appointed spot and give some signals to let her know of his arrival. One of his devices will be to throw a stone at the birds sleeping on the trees which will shriek in fear. The heroine will understand that he had come and meet him soon. Many a time the birds may make the shrill noice due to other causes and this will mislead the heroine and she may go to the spot beforetime and wait for him indefinitely and will have to return disappointed (131). The obstacles will be due to other causes also. At the appointed hour the mother of the lady-love would not have slept. The street dogs will disturb her. The watchers will have to be feared. The hero will not be able to understand all these and will wait at the place for a long time. He will leave some signs to indicate to her of his having gone there.

The heroine will manage to go over to the appointed place after sometime and will see the sign made by the hero to let her know of his having gone there. She will feel very much for disappointing him as well as herself. She will eagerly wait for the next meeting to explain to him the cause of delay (109).

The secret meeting being so difficult the lady-love's friend will gently suggest to the hero that it is not proper for him to meet the heroine like this. She will say that it is better for both of them if he approaches the

parents of the girl and arranges for their marriage(112). The hero is fully aware of the obstacles in meeting her secretly but he somehow has a thrill in such secret meetings. He is not afraid of taking risks in meeting her like this (134). The lady-love's friend understands that the hero would like to continue kaḷavu for a long time. Therefore she will very often remind him that he should meet the lady-love's parents. The hero will not listen to her and prolongs the secret meetings. As a result of this the neighbours come to know of their love-affair gradually. It will become the talk of the entire neighbourhood (137). The foster-mother of the girl knowing such talks are going on, will try to prevent her from going out of the house. The heroine will be under strict watch in her house (109).

The inability of the lady-love in not being able to meet him makes her reject her food and this will make her thin (97). Her body exhibits various signs. The parents could not understand the real cause of their daughter's illness. They take her to the fortune-tellers to know the cause.[27] The fortune-tellers prescribe some religious remedies but they are of no avail. On the other hand the suffering of the lady-love will intensify. She has no other way of meeting the hero and so she dreams of the hero. She has almost become a mad girl(97).

The parents will now understand the real cause of her illness but they wonder who that boy will be.

---

27. This is called in Tamil Veṟiyāṭṭu. The man who does this is called vēlan. 'In a place ritually decorated for this purpose, the vēlan invokes the presence of Murugan by offering the red millet mixed with ram's blood and plays a spirited dance designated 'veṟiyāṭṭu'. He diagnoses the girl's sickness by means of kalanku (molucca beans)....' For more details see V. Sp. Manickam, op. cit. p. 45 f.

Knowing that the situation is serious the lady-love's friend obtaining the permission of the heroine reveals the story to her mother who is the foster-mother(203). The foster-mother informs the matter to the mother of the girl and the mother in her turn passes on this news to her husband(135,136).

The hero is aware of the fact that their love-affair has now become public. So he has no other alternative except sending word to her parents conveying his intention to marry her. In some cases the parents will agree to it and the marriage will take place. In other cases the parents may not relish it and refuse to give their daughter to him(138).

In case his proposal is not agreed upon, the hero has only one alternative. He decides to elope with her(17). The heroine also agrees to follow him (43). Both will go being aided by the lady-love's friend. The news of her having gone with him will be known to the parents of the girl. The father and the elder brother will go in search of her. They will meet the girl on the way and may bring her home(43). After bringing her home they may give her in marriage to the hero.

If the hero is able to take his lady-love to his destination without any obstacle he will wait for the parents of the girl to come in search of their daughter and arrange for the marriage with usual rites.[28] If they do not turn up after a reasonable time, the hero

---

28. Tolkāppiyar does not mention any subdivisions for the kalavu theme in his chapter on kalavu but in the sūtra 489 he seems to suggest that the kalavu theme may be treated under some headings such as kāmappunarci etc. So, the later writers on the love theme used to treat it under various heads.

will marry her without any rites[29] and even then it will be a recognised marriage(141).[30]

(C) The Theme of Married Life

The theme of married life is spoken of by Tolkāppiyar in his chapter on kaṟpu.[31] The kaṟpu theme is a continuation of the love-theme. Various stages of married life are mentioned by Tolkāppiyar (490). The happy union of the husband and the wife is called Malidal in ancient Tamil tradition. But one cannot expect that the couple will always be in the same state of mind. There may be occasional quarrels

---

29. For some details of the rites as prevalent in ancient Tamil society see V. Sp. Manickam, op. cit. p. 95 ff.

30. For an account of the kalavu theme as found in the Śaṅgam literature see V. Sp. Manickam, op. cit. p. 26 ff.

31. At the beginning of the chapter on kaṟpu Tolkāppiyar has some interesting remarks on the custom of marriage. These remarks have no direct bearing to the topic on hand but they are useful to the students of history and sociology. He says (142) that there was a time when the rites of marriage (karaṇam) enjoined to the first three castes began to be extended to the fourth caste. He also says that the āryas (meaning the elders of the society or the Aryans) introduced the form of marriage after the lovers began to prove false and the ladies were considered unworthy. We are unable to know what these remarks actually mean. Perhaps the original custom of Tamilnadu was to allow the lovers to start their family life without any system of marriage and the custom of marriage was introduced by the Aryans who came to Tamilnadu. Tolkāppiyar and the Śaṅgam literature give clear evidence to the fact that the two cultures namely the northen and the southern, got mixed even in the pre-Śaṅgam age. For a detailed analysis of the fusion of the two cultures see the present author's paper on the Influence of Sanskrit on the Śaṅgam age presented at the International Sanskrit Conference held in New Delhi in 1972. See also N. Subrahmanian, Hist. of Tamilnad Chapter V.

between them. Mostly the quarrels will be for petty reasons. The quarrels will sometimes end very soon or they may last for sometime. If the quarrel comes to an end quickly it is termed in ancient Tamil tradition Pulavi. If the quarrel prolongs for sometime it is known as Ūḍal. In Sanskrit literature too, love-quarrel is a popular theme but it is not divided there into any aspects. Mostly the husband will be the cause for such love-quarrels. But the love quarrels are started and continued by the wives. The husband tries either to passify her or explain his position. If the wife and the husband understand each other it is called Uṇardal. They again start their life with the happy mood in which they were orginally.

It is true that the lovers had moved very intimately during their kaḷavu period. But in kaḷavu they could not really enjoy that intimacy due to the fact that they were in constant fear. Now they have become husband and wife and they can meet at any time rather they can live openly together. The intimacy which they have now is more enjoyable and they can pour their love on each other with more vigour and peace of mind (144). The lady who once showed her love always under fear is now able to exhibit it with doubled force. She cooks very delicious dishes for for him. Whatever might be the real taste of the food it is over-enjoyed by the husband. He wonders how she is able to convert all the items into such tasteful ones (144). The husband is not in a mood to leave her alone to do any of the household duties. He wants to be always with her. He very often interferes with her work whether she cooks or makes garlands. He is always after her talking something

sweet. Both have now time to talk leisurely and they have ample opportunity to exchange the feelings they underwent during the kaḷavu period. For the mistakes they committed in kaḷavu they can now do expiations (144).

In due course the wife becomes pregnant. When she is in the advanced stages of pregnancy and after sometime in her post-natal period she will not be able to give him satisfaction physically. The husband will be in a mood to quench his physical passions. In order to satisfy his physical wants he may develop friendship with concubines and prostitutes.[32] His contact with these women may sometimes last long. When he returns after enjoying the company of these girls it is natural that he comes with a guilty feeling.

The wife may sometimes wish to have his company but he may not be available to her for the reason that he is mostly with his concubines. Only she can understand how difficult it was for her to be without him. Many nights she spends sleeplessly embracing only the pillows. The poor pillows cannot be conscious of her feelings. The husband will slowly step into the bedroom and sit at her feet. He touches her feet gently and tries to passify her (144). She is extremely angry with him and wants to show it fully but her

---

32. Two types of common girls are recognised in Tamil literature. One is called kāmakkilattiyar (concubines) and the other known as paraittaiyar (prostitutes). The concubines are not low girls. They are concubines because they are not married by the hero according to rituals. They are as faithful to the hero as the heroine would be. But the prostitutes are common girls who sell their bodies for money and they have no status in literature. But Naccinārkkiniyar seems to hold that both the types of common girls are the same. See his remark under sūtra 131. For an account of the practice of prostitution in ancient Tamilnadu see, V. Sp. Manickam, op. cit. p. 165 ff.

modesty prevents her from showing it. She talks to him ironically that the husband should behave more cultured. During the kaḷavu how he was attached to her ! How impatient he was to meet her always and be in her company ! Where did all these go now? How quickly he is changed (148) ?

Sometimes she scolds or redicules him under the pretext of speaking to her son. She tells her son 'How exactly you resemble your daddy in his bad actions' (145). She tells him sarcastically that the concubine is more beautiful than her. The husband will be staying at home on some days. She will ask him 'What wonder ! you are at home. Do not stay here for my sake. Please go there if you want'. The husband is patiently coping up with all her anger and sarcastic remarks. The wife is not in a mood to come to terms with him. So the husband gives a warning to her citing the examples of many wives who suffered a lot on account of their adament attitude. The wife does not want to be serious any more. She adjusts herself to him (144).

Some wives will leave their anger the moment their husbands come and beg them of their pardon. They will say 'it is not proper on your part to lower yourself. What the world will think of me and you if it sees you begging me'. The husband is highly pleased with her and they become united (145).

The cause of temporary separation of the husband and wife will not always be his relationship with the other girls. There are other reasons for separation. The husband would like to pursue his higher studies after marriage. He may have to go to

foreign countries for this purpose. This type of separation is 'separation due to studies'. If there is war between his country and the other country the husband may choose to act as the mediator. On some other occasions too he may go as a mediator. This kind of separation is known as 'separation due to ambassadorship'. At times the husband may undertake a trip to other countries to earn more wealth. This is 'separation due to money' (26). The wife will not easily agree to allow him to go leaving her. Under the circumstances he will try to explain his mission either directly or through her friend. The wife will now understand that the separation is for his future benefits. She will not be able to bear his separation yet she will somehow agree to it. The husband is particular to convince her before he undertakes his journey(183).

When the husband returns after some months or years after fulfilling his mission she will not be angry with him. She will not speak harsh words to him. She will be only glad to receive him and thank god for making him return home safe. She will conduct religious rites thanking god (144).

The husband even though he has not shown his feelings outwardly, will be very sorry to leave her. He will always be thinking of her. He will be waiting for the time to fulfil his mission and return to his wife. He has very speedy horses to take him home as quickly as his mind. He will not delay his journey even for a moment(192).

(D) The Heroic Theme

It is a well known fact that heroism has always occupied man with utmost interest. The description of heroic events in literature will naturally evince a lot of excitement in readers. Therefore Tolkāppiyar prescribed heroic incidents to be described in literature. The particulars of heroic theme as prescribed by Tolkāppiyar are found in his chapter on Puṟattiṇai. In the treatment of aham and puṟam incidents, Tolkāppiyar shows some difference. As we have already noted the aham theme consisting of kaḷavu and kaṟpu are divided by him into seven tiṇais namely kaikkiḷai, mullai etc. Some general remarks on the aham theme are given by him in the first chapter named Ahattiṇai Iyal and in the fifth chapter known as Poruḷ Iyal. A detailed note on the development of aham theme is undertaken by him in the third chapter entitled Kaḷaviyal and in the fourth chapter known as Kaṟpiyal. But the puṟam theme is treated by him only in the second chapter entitled Puṟattiṇai Iyal. The puṟam theme does not engage his attention in other chapters. There is another difference in the treatment of these two themes. The kaḷavu and kaṟpu themes are not divided by him into any sub tiṇais. The commentators try to subdivide them into various heads according to the nature of the theme found in that portion of the theme. As far as the puṟam theme is concerned it is divided into big tiṇais and sub tiṇais by Tolkāppiyar himself. The sub tiṇais are known in Tamil tradition as Turais.

The puṟam theme also is spoken of as having seven tiṇais namely Vetci, Vañci Uḷiñai, Tumbai,

Vāhai, Kāñci and Pāḍān.[33] These puṟattiṇais are held by Tolkāppiyar to be the outer tiṇais of their corresponding inner tiṇais i. e. Ahattiṇais. Thus Vetci is the corresponding outer tiṇai of its inner tiṇai kuṟiñji; Vañci; for mullai; uḻiṇai for marudam ; tumbai for neydal ; vāhai for pālai; kāñci for peruntiaṇi and pāḍān for kaikkiḷai. Tolkāppiyar does not explain how these tiṇais become corresponding to their inner tiṇais. The commentators offer details as to how they become corresponding outers. The details are not important for us here. We may understand that the names of tiṇais in puṟam are selected from the particular flowers worn by the characters taking part in the tiṇai.

It may be pointed out again here that the puṟam does not consist of heroic theme alone. Heroic theme is only an aspect of it. As we have divided the puṟam theme into some catagories we will pay our attention to the heroic theme alone in this section and the other themes will be considered in proper places.

If we want to describe a man as a hero in the sense of a brave soldier we cannot merely describe him as a brave warrior and make him a warrior. We have to create scenes in which the character should be placed and we must describe his brave actions. Only such treatment will give the impression that he is a daring hero. War incidents give the best scope to bring out the heroic nature of anybody. Therefore Tolkāppiyar chooses war events in his puṟam, theme.

---

33. Although Tolkāppiyar classifies the puṟattiṇais into seven, a later work on the paṉṉiru paḍalam (about 9th A. D.) classifies this into 12 categories. Ilampuraṇar condemns it as illogical. See Ilam. Com. p. 73.

Politically the Śaṅgam Tamilnadu[34] was divided into various big and small states and there was constant enmity among the rulers of that time. Almost all the time was experiencing emergency situation in that age. But a very encouraging aspect to be noted in this connection is that the constant war situation never affected the normal life of the Tamils. They were mostly engaged in their usual duties. That is why the Śaṇgam age could produce equal or more number of aham songs in which love was the theme. Moreover, even in the war field the situation was similar. The war was mainly between the armies. No damage will be done to those who are not soldiers and who are not in the war field. That is why the Śaṅgam songs very often describe the presence of Pāṇars (bards), poets, women and others in the war field during or after the time of the war. Of course, the border villages of each nation might have experienced some troubles mostly to their properties but every care was taken to save human life.

The place of war is two. One is the fort and its adjacent parts. Second is the plain land. In the wars, the fort occupied a very important place in those times. The entire strength of the king lay in the forts and in the armies.

In the first puṟattiṇai known as vetci[35] Tolkāppiyar gives scope (60, 61) for the description of the following scenes otherwise called tuṟais ; 1. the noice of trumpets,

---

34. For the political history of the Śaṇgam age see N. Subrahmanian, Śaṅgam Polity and Hist. of Tamilnad under relevant sections.

35. According to Tolkāppiyar vetci has 14 tuṟais plus another 21 tuṟais. We are giving only some here and we are reserving the other tuṟais to be counted at proper places.

2. words of unseen men in neighbouring villages serving as omen, 3. expedition without being seen by enemy, 4. report of the spies without being seen by the enemies, 5. staying around the place suggested by the spies, 6. massacring the residents of the place, 7. taking away the cows, 8. successfully emerging from the conflict with the enemies, 9. not exposing the cows to misery, 10. appearing at the place suggested (by their own people), 11. Stationing the cows taken, 12. classifying the cows, 13. pleasure-party with food, drink and dance 14. giving away the cows (to the needy), 15. wearing of the flowers of palmyra, margosa and common mountain ebony by the renowned warriors of vast and great armies to distinguish themselves from the kings of great enmity, 16. the action of the warriors in not receding from the place of severe war scene, 17. making a terrible fight against those (who took away the cows), 18. taking back the cows, 19. extolling the superiority of the famous king, 20. warriors taking terrible vows within themselves in war, 21. resisting the onslaughts of the enemy and falling a prey to the sword in battle, 22. beating the drums to send symbolically the fallen warriors to the heaven, 23. selecting the stone for installing it on the burial place of the soldier, 24. carrying the memorial stone, 25. washing it with water, 26. installing it on the ground, 27. making the necessary inscription with due honour, 28. extolling the stone and 29. singing of some songs on some gods and other traditional songs of war.

The second tiṇai vañci[36] provides scope (64) for

36. In Tolkāppiyar's division also vañci has these 13 tuṟais.

the description of the following turais: 1. the din arising from the two enemies, 2. setting fire on a large scale, 3. the greatness (of the armies) well exhibited, 4. giving away (weapons of war to soldiers) and presents, 5. heroism shown in killing (the enemies) by slowly approaching them, 6. words of congratulation on the military honour conferred upon the kings, 7. the highly valourous part of the army rushing against the enemy considering them to be insignificant, 8. the greatness of one resisting the attack of the enemy like a stone a huge flood, 9. the state of having large provisions of food, 10. the lustre of the victorious, 11. the dimness of the defeated, 12. the tribute (received from the enemy) on account of unmitigated valour and 13. the honour and presents offered to those who were maimed in battle.

The third tiṇai uḷiñai[37] is expected to contain(67,68) the following turais: 1. the act of a king directed towards capturing the country of his enemy (who does not accept his suzerainty or obey his command), 2. the greatness of the king in carrying out his wishes, 3. proceeding towards the ancient fort (of the enemy), 4. the vastness of elephantry, 5. the riches of the besieged king, 6. the difficulties experienced by the besieger, 7. the pitiable situation of the besieged in resisting alone, 8. the piteous fort of the besieged who cannot resist the onslaughts of the besieger, 9. the sending of the royal umbrella in an auspicious hour, 10. the sending of the sword in an auspicious hour, 11. the clash between the two armies when the army of the besieger is getting up through ladders,

---

37. In Tolkāppiyam uḷiñai has 8 plus 12 tuṟais.

12. the besieger besieging the inner fort after capturing the outer one by killing in battle the army of the enemy, 13. the defence desired by the besieged, 14. the miraculous attack desired by the besieger, 15. the army defeated at the battle in the moat, 16. the complete disaster of the army fallen in the battle within the fort, 17. the attack of those who spread themselves on the fort and consequently are on a higher level, 18. the purificatory bath of the besieger after gaining victory in the fort and taking hold of the crown of the besieged or assuming the crown, name and title of his vanquished enemy, 19. the purificatory bath to the sword of the victor and 20. collecting the armies of the victor so as to be honoured.

The fourth tiṇai tumbai[38] makes room (71) for the following tuṟais: 1. the three stages of infantry, elephantry and cavalry creating awe in the friends of foes, 2. the state of the army when one, seeing that the king fighting with his spear is surrounded with foes, leaves his scene of action and comes to his rescue, 3. the piteous scene where the commanders of both sides have fallen dead, 4. unyielding resistance of a warrior entering into the thick of the fight and protecting the rear of the army when the army is on the point of being broken by the enemy, 5. success in hand-to-hand fight without weapons, 6. the greatness of attacking elephants with those who are on them, 7. eulogy of the king who has fallen with his elephant by the warriors of the victorious king, 8. state when both kings with their armies fight with their swords and stand balanced in the battle-field, 9. the scene

38. Tolkāppiyar divides tumbai into 12 tuṟais.

when a warrior wins undying fame by dashing against the enemy in rage when he finds that their king was killed by them and 10. one slaughtering by brandishing his sword the different sections of the enemy's army broken on his advance.

The fifth tiṇai vāhai[39] allots provision (74) for the following: 1. the undivided attention to war in the camps both in winter and in summer, 2. the success gained by the warriors in the battle-field, 3. the dance before the king's chariot at the success of the warriors, 4. the traditional dance behind his chariot, 5. the spear which was able to withstand the attacks of the foes, 6. the capacity of the warriors to bear the strong attacks of the foes, 7. able-bodied warriors fighting with the conviction that the physical body is transitory, 8. throwing oneself in fire according to the tenets of the great which make the foes feel ashamed and 9. taking hold of the enemy's country.

The sixth tiṇai kāñci[40] offers possibility (76) to the following: 1. the bravery to die wounded in the battle considering the nature of the worldly life, 2. the state of the wounded being attended to by the devils in the absence of loving relatives, 3. the state of the mother ready to die at the glorious death of her son in the battle-field and 4. the state of the wives weeping for their husbands.

The seventh tiṇai pāḍān has no relevance to the heroic theme and so the ideas connected with this

---

39. The fifth tiṉai in Tolkāppiyam i. e. vāhai is divided into 7 plus 18 kinds. We have reserved some aspects of this tiṉai to our next section.

40. Tolkāppiyar speaks of 13 X 2 tuṟais for kāñci.

tiṇai may be considered at the suitable context in this work.

It may be noted that the puṟam theme as contained in Tolkāppiyam provides no scope for developing any individual characters. In puṟam, only a combined characterisation seems to be possible. But Tolkāppiyar allows the mention of individual names in puṟam whereas the mention of individual names is prohibited in the aham theme (56, 57). Tolkāppiyar's intention in such prescriptions may be discussed in a following chapter of this work.[41]

(E) The Theme of Secular Ideas

Strictly speaking the themes of love, married life and heroism should also be classified under secular theme because those themes too contain only secular ideas. They were classified differently in the previous sections for the fact that they represented only some aspects of secularism. In addition to these aspects of secular idea Tolkāppiyar makes room for purely secular themes. It may be remembered here that the age of Tolkāppiyam and the Śaṅgam was particularly marked by the spirit of secular ideas. This is not to be misunderstood that the ancient Tamilnadu was against religious ideas and practices. There is ample evidence to demonstrate that the Tamils were religious in attitude.

41. See chapter on the theory of rasa (ix).

Their religious ideas were more or less working in the background. It may even be the fact that the ancient Tamils were not inclined to mix the religious ideas in literature. According to ancient Tamils the purpose of literature was to give enjoyment and guide the worldly affairs rather than preaching the religious ideas. This seems to be the general attitude of the ancient people towards literature. In Sanskrit tradition too literature was mainly meant for secular aims. The origin of Sanskrit epics speaks clearly on this matter. The Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyaṇa were written originally to extol the heroic deeds of the Pāṇḍavas and Rāma. At a later age the religious and other ideas were incorporated into the epics. But one important point is to be stressed here. The secular nature of the literature belonging to a certain period cannot be taken to mean that the people of that age were not religious The Sanskrit epics were originally produced on secular basis at a time when it has been established that the people were religious.[42] In the fourth or third century B. C. which is generally accepted to be the original epic period, the Vedic religion was getting itself transformed into epic religion. But the Sanskrit epics were originally produced on secular basis.[43] Similarly the general trend

42. The history of Sanskrit literature starts with the Vedic age which has a bulk of literature based on religion. But strictly speaking the Vedic literature is not to be called 'literature'. The actual literature starts in Sanskrit only with the Epics. Both the Epics, according to accepted authorities, were originally written for extolling the heroes. And later on all other elements were incorporated into them. See for a detailed account of the Epics, Winternitz, Hist. of Ind. Lit. Section on the Epics.

43. In the Śaṅgam literature we get interesting references to the story of Rāma and from them we may guess that the Tamils at that time knew Rāma only as a hero. See S. Vaiyapuri Pillai, Tamil Ilakkiya Saritatattil Kāviya Kālam, p. 78.

of the Śaṅgam literature cannot be taken to mean the absence of religion at that period. It would therefore be more appropriate to say that the ancient Tamil literary tradition wanted to reserve literature for a definite purpose. The purpose was to treat it as a reflection of the worldly ideas in an enjoyable way. Soon in Tamil literary tradition too the religious and non-secular ideas crept in. We will be able to devote ourselves to considering this aspect in the following section. Here we will confine ourselves to the secular ideas found in ancient Tamil traditon as sanctioned by Tolkāppiyar.

Tolkāppiyar undoubtedly gives evidence to the fact that erotic literature was existing in his times and he also permits the theme of eroticism. He says that the erotic[44] verses will deal with the erotic acts of men as well as those of gods(80). From this it may be known that even erotic acts of gods will be described in literature along with the acts of human beings. He also permits such literature with reference to children (81). This means that the children too will be associated with eroticism. One may wonder how eroticism may be possible with regard to children. There are some exampls in the Śaṅgam literature in which eroticism is found discribed in relation to children. For example, we will consider this illustration. In Naṟṟiṇai (191) the little girls are described as making girl-like dolls with prominent breasts out of sand under a particular tree which is said to shed upon the breasts the heap of

44. Under this sūtra Ilam. Com. says that this piece of poetry will describe the love of the human girls towards gods and the love of the divine girls to gods. Naccinārkkiniyar adds that this will describe the love of god in human girls.

pollen dust so as to give them a golden colour. This shows, as pointed out by V. Sp. Manickam (op. cit. p.223) how the ancient Tamil society trained its young girls in the erotic field.[45]

Tolkāppiyar also permits erotic verses with reference to the inhabitants of villages (82). It is really proper that the villagers are spoken of in relation to erotic verses. Erotic speeches or oral literature are naturally common to the villagers and therefore Tolkāppiyar seems to have done a great service to literature by according recognition to such erotic verses. This aspect of literature may or may not be liked by cultured readers but it is the duty of all responsible critics to make provision for all aspects of literature in their scheme. Tolkāppiyar should not be mistaken for allowing it. He, while allowing the erotic verses sounds a serious caution note : the erotic verses should be in conformity with accepted usage. This note of warning is very important. In Sanskrit tradition too recognition has been given to erotic themes but they have been carefully handled by standard authors like Bhartṛhari and others.

Other varieties of secular literature prescribed by Tolkāppiyar may be considered now. In his subsections or tuṛais of Pāḍān which is one of the seven puṛattiṇais, he extends scope to the following : 1. eulogising the king in his close proximity with reference to the nature of his ancestors and himself, 2. suggesting to the king that it is time to go to sleep, 3. salutary advice to the

---

45. Thus in the Ṣaṉgam literature even the small girls sometimes speak about the sex which is beyond the limit of their age.

king, 4. benediction upon the king and his descendants and 5. interceding etc. on some occasions.

Another type of secular theme may be noted here. It is to be remembered in this context that in the age of Tolkāppiyam and the Śaṅgam the kings of Tamilnadu took a pride and pleasure in giving a lot of donation of various kinds to the needy especially to the learned men. We may even say that the Śaṅgam age developed it as a cult of the day. As a result of the donations to the able poets the Śaṅgam literature grew in size and quality. There are many poems in the Śaṅgam age which are generally known by the name Āṟṟupaḍai[46] which may be translated as 'the poems of a guide' where a poet or an instrumentalist directs another poet or instrumentalist whom he meets on his way home. The former poet is now returning from a donar from whom he has received a lot of wealth and hospitality. Here the poet has ample scope to describe the way to the capital of the patron, the natural beauties of the country, the quality of the patron the various types of people and other connected matters.

In the pāḍān tiṇai Tolkāppiyar prescribes the following which have a bearing on the above subject: 1. eulogising the giver and reviling the non-giver, 2. message sent to the king through the gatekeeper enumerating the miseries undergone in the long journey from home, 3. bards singing about the king's spotless good fame, 4. the poets and instrumentalists inducing

---

46. In the Pattuppāṭṭu which is a collection of the ten Śaṅgam works there are five poems of this kind. They are Tirumurugāṟṟuppaḍai, Porunar Āṟṟuppaḍai, Siṟupāṇ Āṟṟuppaḍai, Perumpāṇ Āṟṟuppaḍai and Kūttar Āṟṟuppaḍai. Of these all except one, Tirumurugāṟṟuppaḍai, praise the donar while Tirumurugāṟṟuppaḍai speaks of the glory of lord Muruga.

others to approach the king mentioning what they received from the king, 5. mentioning their wants and 6. eulogising the prosperous condition of the king after receiving the reward.

(F) The Moral and Philosophical Theme

The ancient Tamil literature as conceived by Tolkāppiyar may not be explicitly religious even though religious ideas were at the bottom of the literature. The case of moral and philosophical ideas is not like that. Tolkāppiyar seems to believe strongly in the moral and philosophical basis of life. No systematic or thorough research has so far been done into the moral and philosophical elements of ancient Tamil literature. It may be generally remarked that the ancient Tamils seem to have a strong inclination and insight into high philosophy. Tolkāppiyar at times gives evidence to the philosophical achievements of the ancient Tamils. Tolkāppiyar cannot be expected to reveal all his knowledge of philosophy in his Tolkāppiyam which is a work on grammar and poetics. But he sometimes unconsciously exhibits his knowledge of high philosophy. For example, the words koḍinilai, kandaḷi and vaḷḷi used by him in Tolkāppiyam stand evidence to this. Especially the word kandaḷi seems to denote a deep philosophical meaning. According to Naccinārkkiniyar this means 'a formless and self-existing principle which is beyond all philosophies'. If Tolkāppiyar also had meant such a high principle it is evident that he was

aware of deep philosophy. Tolkāppiyar prescribes philosophical ideas to be included in proper contexts which is a clear proof to his bent of mind towards philosophy.

It is to be discussed briefly here the scope of moral and philosophical ideas in literature. The love and other secular ideas will naturally attract the readers and keep them engaged throughout. But the moral and philosophical ideas cannot be expected to evince the same reaction from the readers. If a work is completly on moral or philosophical ideas the readers will not take much interest in that work. The main reason is that such subjects are very dry for a common reader and the literature is mostly meant for an average reader only. But a great personality like Tolkāppiyar will never be satisfied by secular themes alone. Their main aim is to teach morality and philosophy but they know at the same time the mind of the readers. Tolkāppiyar therefore adopts a subtle technique to achieve his goal. He takes a theme which is outwardly secular and inserts the moral and philosophical ideas in places most suited for this purpose. For example, we may take this occasion. The lover and the lady-love meet together and develop love. This is purely a love scene where there is no scope for any moral teaching. Tolkāppiyar remarks here, as we have already noted that the love between a man and a girl is possible only when it has been willed like that. This remark is purely unnecessary for a situation like this. But Tolkāppiyar will not view it like this. To him the love theme itself is narrated only for inserting such ideas of morality. If Tolkāppiyar had viewed love as a mere secular affair he would not have treated it like this.

We may take another occasion. In the theme of married life Tolkāppiyar narrates the normal events of a family life. But he never forgets to remind the readers that the married life is not for pleasure alone. He prescribes that the husband has an utmost duty to cause a son through his wife and this duty brings him from the house of the concubine to be in union with his wife for the sake of a son (185). Although he recognises the theme of love as a literary authority he very often reminds the hero through the lady-love's friend that he should always adopt a righteous path and try to get her married as soon as possible. He never misses any opportunity to insert the moral ideas in the middle of the love or other themes. As a rule he allows the meeting of the lover and the lady-love on all days in the month even when the heroine is in her monthly course. But he does not forget to say that she should do expiations for this in her kaṟpu stage (144). This and other similar occasions will prove his inner mind.

For the sake of literature Tolkāppiyar permits the description of war events. But his real personality feels sad about it. Therefore he takes this golden opportunity to inculcate moral and philosophical ideas. For this main reason he creates the vāhai and kāñci tiṇais in which he gets rare opportunities to achieve his aims. In the vāhai tiṇai he prescribes these also along with those mentioned previously. 1. The six duties of brahmins.[47] The six duties of the brahmins,

---

47. We get very often in the Ṣaṅgam literature references to brahmins. We hear of the existence of separate colonies of brahmins. Some important and best Ṣaṅgam poets were brahmins. Rajamanikkanar in his Tamil moli ilakkiya varalāṟu analyses in detail references to the brahmins in the Ṣaṅgam poetry.

according to the commentators, are : the study of the Vedas and their teaching, performing sacrifices and officiating as priests in sacrifices and giving away gifts and receiving them. 2. The five duties of kings which the commentators hold as follows : the study of the Vedas, the performances of sacrifices, the giving away of the gifts, looking after the welfare of subjects and the using of weapons. 3. the six duties of the people belonging to the third stratum of society are explained as follows : the study of the Vedas, the performances of sacrifices, the giving away of gifts, agriculture, tending cows and trade. 4. The eight duties of recluses which are taken to mean in the following way : According to Iḷampūraṇar, bathing, lying on the floor, dressing in skin, having matted hair, worshipping fire, not going into inhabited villages and towns, getting provision of food and in forests worship of god. According to Naccinārkkiniyar, absence of desire for food and water, enduring heat and cold, residing in a particular place in a particular posture, speaking in bare necessity and observing silence.

If we calmly ponder over we may ask ourselves : what is the necessity to narrate the duties of these people if it is not to inculcate morality ?

Tolkāppiyar also wants the description of the following themes in literature. They are : the moral duties of the warriors, advice to avoid amorous look towards other's wives, the conduct according to śāstras, leaving off the ties of the family on account of the feeling that all are alike and the stage when desire vanishes.

In addition to the isolated descriptions of the moral and philosophical ideas as mentioned above

Tolkāppiyar prescribes such ideas in the most suited contexts. As pointed out earlier the war events provide ample chances to moral and philosophical ideas. In the war field the scene will be very much suited to recieve moral and philosophical lessons. Tolkāppiyar wants the writers to describe the following in the midst of the war description: 1. The wife who used to meet her husband with sweet smile not touching him in the wounded state fearing the devils that surround him. This type of description will induce in the readers a strong feeling that there is no one dear to anybody and will leave him at some stage. 2. The eulogy of the cremation ground which stands firm though witnessing many disappearing from this world. The description of such a scene will provide ample scope for the able writers to speak high philosophy.

Thus we may see that Tolkāppiyar includes all possible themes suitable for literature in his scheme. He prescribes the details not to restrict the freedom of writers. He only suggests that the theme may be handled in these ways. The writers according to their capacity may develop the theme in any way they like. We cannot say that the Śaṅgam writers who followed Tolkāppiyar, accepted the prescriptions of Tolkāppiyar fully. They seem to have followed him in most cases and they have deviated from him to some extent. [48] This is natural for all literature. It is really wonderful that Tolkāppiyar in such an ancient period was able to suggest so many useful ideas.

---

48. For an account of the Śaṅgam poetry see T. P. Meenakshisundaran, A History of Tamil Literature, pp. 17–33.

CHAPTER

3

The Characters

It is a well known fact that the human characters are essential in a literature in which love, heroism etc. are to be described. The love between two animals or birds and also the adventures of these creatures may occasionally be described either by way of simile or otherwise but they cannot take the role of main characters.[1] In Tolkāppiyar's scheme of literature too he makes provision to the human characters, his theme being mainly love and heroism. But it may be noted that Tolkāppiyar does not have any separate chapter on the characters nor does he mention about the characters directly. He also does not speak of characterisation directly. It is a matter of common knowledge that a mere introduction of characters will not add any charm to literature. One of the major contributors to the success of literature is characteri-

---

1. In the Śaṅgam poetry especially in the aham poetry there are many descriptions of nature. But the Śaṅgam poets are not interested in the Natural description as such. As rightly remarked by M. Varadarajan (The Treatment of Nature in Śaṅgam Literature, p. 404) and V. Sp. Manickam, (op. cit. p. 118) Nature of all kinds is made to serve as the background of human behaviour. This seems to be the right attitude with regard to natural descriptions. In Sanskrit literature too the same method is preferred. For example the Megha Sandēśa of Kālidāsa is full of natural description especially in the purva megha. All these natural descriptions are made subservient to the emotion of the speaker i. e. Yakṣa. In fact a mere natural description will not be so beautiful if it is not blended with some human emotions.

sation. If that be the case one may wonder how Tolkāppiyar failed to make observations on this important aspect of literature.

Tolkāppiyar expresses his views on the characters and characterisation in a way peculiar only to ancient Tamil literature. Instead of speaking about the characters he lists the occasions in which the characters are allowed to speak. The speeches prescribed by him are known as kūṟṟus. Thus in Tolkāppiyam one very often finds short or long enumerations of occasions which are said to be proper for respective characters to make their speech. This peculiar feature of ancient Tamil literature is a technique adopted by the ancient Tamils. The motive and purpose behind this technique will be explained in a later chapter of this work. We will consider the characters of Tolkāppiyar now.[2]

Tolkāppiyar says that the brahmins, hero's friend, lady-love's friend, the foster-mother, the hero and the heroine are the persons that are allowed to make their speech in kaḷavu (492). This means that Tolkāppiyar permits only these characters in kaḷavu. From the occasions mentioned by Tolkāppiyar for the speeches of these characters we have to reconstruct their nature.

As it is common to any literature, Tolkāppiyam also has a hero who is termed as talaivan in Tamil which means pati or nāyaka and who leads the events of the literature. We have already mentioned that in ancient Tamil literature there is mention of five heroes

---

2. Some of the facts we mentioned in the last chapter have to be repeated in this chapter also. This is unavoidable in order to make the present chapter complete and informative.

each representing a particular geographical region recognised in ancient Tamil literature i. e. mullai etc. Tolkāppiyar does not mention about the normal age of his heroes but from tradition we could understand that he is sixteen years of age[3]. He is expected to possess ten qualities namely heredity, character, manliness, age, appearance, love, gentlemanliness, grace, intelligence and wealth (269). He is not expected to have the following twelve qualities namely jealousy, cruelty, pride, back-biting, hard words, irresoluteness, sluggishness, haughtiness on account of heredity, lowering one's dignity, poverty forgetfulness, and misplaced love(270).

He meets[4] a girl in a proper setting and develops deep love even at the first meeting. He is able to conclude that the divinely beautiful girl standing before him is a human girl from the human characteristics found in her. In the first meeting he converses with the girl through his eyes. In the second meeting with her he is able to go nearer to her and speak to her under the pretext of speaking to some birds or creatures found in the garden in which he meets her. He is very passionate but he is able to control himself by his natural quality of dignity and mental strength. He then tries to speak to her. He is very clever and knows that the girl will be pleased if she is praised. He is capable of understanding her mind and explain-

---

3. M. Raghava Iyangar, op. cit. p. 53; V. Sp. Manickam, op. cit. p. 134.

4. In Ahattiṉai (43) there is one sūtra which mentions the occasions for the hero to speak. In Kalaviyal there is one sūtra (105) in which such occasions are enumerated. The character of the hero is mainly reconstructed from these occasions. At the same time other sūtras which have helped us with information regarding this have been made use of to know the character of the hero. The same method is followed to reconstruct all the characters of Tolkāppiyam.

ing his difficulties. He gauges her mind and comes to the conclusion that she loves him really.

In the second meeting itself he touches her limbs pleading false excuses for the same. He is very happy to meet her and explains his passion to her. He is very sorry even to be separated from her temporarily. He is cautious of the consequences of his love. He goes to his friend to request him to arrange for a meeting with her. When he knows that his friend is not very co-operative he goes to the friend of the lady-love and requests her to arrange for the meeting. He tries to please her by giving her some presents. He succeeds in making her accept his presents. If she is not very enthusiastic about it he threatens her by informing her of his decision to mount the palmyra horse. He knows that his mounting the palmyra horse will bring bad name to the heroine.

He tries to meet the heroine at an appointed place in the day or in the night. He will be usually punctual but sometimes he is late and feels very sorry for being late. He makes signs to announce his arrival to the heroine. He may sometimes fail to meet her in the assigned place. He feels the time very heavy in her absence. He is very much disappointed to miss her. He determines not to leave that place without seeing her. If she is not turning up at a reasonable time he makes some indications to let her know of his having gone there.

He undergoes a lot of trouble in meeting her in secret places but he takes a joy in such meetings. He knows his responsibility to marry her quickly but he wishes to prolong she secret meetings as far as possible.

He is never worried about the dangers on the way. It is he who is responsible for making his secret love known to others. If he knows that his love has been known to her parents he sends message to her parents conveying his decision to marry her. If the proposal is accepted he marries her according to usual rites if not, he decides to elope with her to some place.

Before taking her to some place without the knowledge of her parents he plans the route and if the way is not very congenial he does not take her with him. If the season is not favourable to them he will not take her. He has to take her through the desert regions and he is consoling her with many kind words to make her forget the difficulty of the way.

If her father or elder brother overtakes them on their way he firmly tells him that he is determined to marry her. He takes her to some place and marries her after waiting for sometime for her parents.

If his proposal for marriage has been accepted by her parents he will not leave her even if he is required to go on embassy, war or study.

We will now see the character of the heroine who is called in Tamil Talaivi which means nāyikā.

Tolkāppiyar does not say how old she will be normally but from tradition we understand that she is twelve years of age.[5] She knows in the first meeting

5. M. Raghava Iyangar, op. cit. p. 53.

itself that she has begun to love him deeply.[6] She is a very modest girl and reserves her feelings. In the second meeting when the lover is trying to touch her under various pretexts she gently objects to it. When she knows that he is very passionate she yields to him. She will never openly tell her emotions but her physical body will exhibit many signs indicative of her inner feelings. She is a match in all respects to the hero and possesses the ten qualities as the hero has. She is so modest that she expresses her feelings mostly through her friend. She is suggesting to the hero the secret places for their meetings. When she openly refuses to yield to the hero she inwardly wants to accept his wishes. She knows that it is her duty to obey her lover and she never goes against his wishes.

She is always modest and credulous. She patiently hears from the hero what all difficulties she will have to encounter as a lady-love and is prepared to undergo them for the sake of love. Although she does not show her feelings out she is equally passionate.

She would like to see him closely but her natural shyness will prevent her from doing that. So she will see him without his seeing her. She will stand in such a position to be seen by him. She shows all her emotion through her simple smile. While she is in his company she is bewildered. She is unnerved by her own extreme shyness. She is in ecstasy when she

---

6. Tolkāppiyar does not have any separate sūtra to mention the suitable occasions for the heroine to speak in his Ahattiṉai Iyal. Ilampūranar (p. 56) thinks that Tolkāppiyar might have originally had a separate sūtra for Talaivi which must have been lost by the mistake of the scribe. In kalaviyal there are three sūtras (109–111) prescribing the speeches of the heroine. Here Tolkāppiyar gives a long list of occasions suitable for the heroine to speak.

meets him. She cannot bear separation from him even if it is for a short period.

In spite of her wish to be always with him she is put under heavy watch and not allowed to go out of her house. She waits for an opportunity to meet him and when she knows that he has arrived at the appointed place she will try to meet him after her mother and others have gone to sleep. She sometimes mistakes the signal and even the assigned place due to ambiguity.

She is very sorry on being prevented from going out and meeting him. If she cannot bear his separation she openly tells him of her difficulties. Even though she normally obeys him she at times refuses to obey him if he suggests anything contrary to her wish. She does not believe that he is unable to meet her though she is under strict watch. She decides to die if he does not come to her rescue or if her parents decide to give her in marriage to somebody else.

When she is in strict watch she dreams of him and gets delight. She speaks to herself imagining him before her. She addresses her own limbs or inanimate objects to let her feelings out. She will not take any food being separated from him. Even if her parents take her to the fortune-teller to know the cause of her illness she will not reveal the fact. She is very much worried when she comes to know that her lover has decided to mount the palmyra horse. She is very much disappointed to miss him at the appointed place. If he arrives at an inconvenient hour or place she feels very much. She feels sorry to hear that her lover has gone disappointed being refused by her parents.

She collects all her boldness and advises him to approach her parents for marriage. She even decides to go to her lover's residence or speaks to him leaving her shyness to save her chastity which she considers superior to her life. If her parents refuse to give her in marriage to her lover she decides to go with him to any place. She is very cautious and careful to investigate into all the benefits that may accrue to her in diverse ways and consults her friend. She advises her friend to reveal her love-affair to her parents when proper time comes. She knows that particular hours and days are prohibited from meeting her lover but she meets him at any time convenient to them. She exhibits physical features which betray her love to her father and elder brother.

When she is separated from him she suffers change of complexion. She has her limbs emaciated and her mind devoid of spirit. She in her mind itself argues with her lover. She normally preserves her modesty on all occasions but if she is highly infuriated she loses a bit of it.

It is rare that the lady-love expresses her amorous desire directly, she refuses apparently but means union with the lover. She lets her mind out without her knowledge while she is in sleep. She tactfully answers the questions put by her foster-mother. Yet she cannot hide her limbs especially her breasts growing unusually big on account of her contact with her lover.

The next important character in kaḷavu is the lady-love's friend who is known in Tamil as Tōḻi. She is the daughter of the foster-mother who nourishes the nāyikā from her babyhood(123). The lady-love's

friend plays a very significant role in kaḷavu[7]. She is very free with the lady but she has her reservations. The lady-love consults mostly her friend who advises her viewing the situation critically. She may not first know the love of the lady with the hero but she is wise enough to discover it. She decides the reciprocal love of the lover and the lady by three ways: when the lover comes to her for help, when she infers from the attitude of the lady and when the lover comes to meet the lady. She will try to help the lover only after ascertaining the reciprocal love of each other. The privilege of suggesting the secret meeting place is shared by her and the lady-love. She is always with the lady whenever she meets the lover.

From the scent, appearance, behaviour, food, forgetfulness, walk and action of lady, the lady-love's friend decides that the lady had conjugal union with the lover. She tries to probe into the heart of the lady-love without exceeding her limits. She puts ambiguous questions to the lady and finds out her mind. She does not approve of the behaviour of the hero in meeting the lady in secret. Even when the lover comes and expresses his grief she pretends ignorance. She has the courage to dismiss him advising him to approach the parents of the girl for marriage. She even sends back the lover saying that it is not easy to meet the lady.

If the lover has any doubt regarding the credulousness of the lady the lady-love's friend tries to infuse confidence in him. She is prepared to help the

---

7. In Ahattiṉai there is one sūtra (41) which mentions the occasions for the lady-love's friend to speak. In Kalaviyal one full sūtra is devoted (112) to mention the occasions for the Tōḻi to speak.

hero but she is afraid that she will be taken to task by her relatives. If the lover fails to turn up to the assigned place or if he comes late to the place the lady-love's friend tells the lover how it was difficult for the lady to bear his absence. She waits for the proper occasion to speak to the lover and the lady pertaining the difficulties of the love-affair.

It is her duty to carry the message of the lady to the lover. She informs the lover that because of him the lady has become a laughing stock of the village. She advises him when he wants to go away temporarily leaving the lady. She asks the lover to take care of the lady and not to play with her life. If the lady is suffering by misunderstanding the words of the lover she consoles her. She explains to the lover that the watch over the lady is strict and it is difficult to meet at places secretly. She reminds the hero of his heredity, dignity etc. and requests him to marry the lady soon. She also advises him how difficult the way would be for them to elope with.

If the relatives of the lady have any suspicion, the lady-love's friend removes it by suitable answers. If her own mother who is the foster-mother of the heroine questions, she explains to her that the love-affair of the lady is quite in agreement with the way of the world. She skilfully manages the occasion when the lady is taken to the fortune-teller. If the parents of the lady are not agreeing to give her in marriage with her lover she advises the hero to take her to other places safely. She helps the lady and the hero to go to other places. If the parents agree to the marriage it is the lady-love's friend who will inform this to the hero. She will warn them of the dangers and impediments

which they may come across on their way. When the foster-mother is weeping for the lady after she went with the hero without the knowledge of her parents she will console her mother. The lady-love's friend is given the liberty of praising or speaking low of the lover. She may even demand money from the lover to make him agree to marry the lady. Thus in kaḷavu the lady-love's friend is the most important character.

We may now engage our attention to considering some other characters allowed by Tolkāppiyar in kaḷavu.

The next character to be considered here is the foster-mother.[8] She has more intimacy with the lady than the lady's own mother has. The foster-mother is with the lady from her younger days and it is she who nourished her and taught her the culture of the land. We may even guess that even after she has become a grown-up girl she used to sleep with the foster-mother. It is she who has the chance of observing the lady very closely.

Therefore it is natural that the foster-mother is more worried to know that the lady-love has eloped with her lover. She is more worried about the safety of the way and the future happiness of the lady. She is very much worried that the lover should not ill-treat her daughter. She considers her as her own daughter and

---

8. One sūtra in the Ahattiṇai mentions the occasions for the foster-mother to speak (38). In kalaviyal one sūtra is alloted for describing the suitable occasions for the foster-mother to speak (113).

in kaḷavu the foster-mother is addressed by Tolkāppiyar as mother. She goes to fortune-tellers to know about the lady. She closely watches the omens to console herself. She sincerely enquires from the fortune-tellers about the past, present and the future of the lady. She even goes to the extent of starting from her house to search for the girl in other villages.

If she is suspicious of the character of the lady she questions her. She will ask her why the neighbourhood is talking something about her. She knows the nature of the lady and if she knows any peculiarity in her she watches her. She has the right to move with the lady-love more intimately and she could notice that the lady's breasts suddenly have an unusual growth. This makes her suspicious and she indirectly enquires the lady about it. If she happens to see the lover and the lady-love together she takes her to task. She takes the lady to the fortune-teller to know about the truth and if the lady is unusually perturbed she grows restless.

She has the privilege of sleeping with the girl and this sometimes helps her to notice the lady who begins to prattle in her dream about her love-affair. She prays to god for the welfare of the lady. Although she is worried about the lady for her having gone with her lover she appreciates to herself the chastity of the lady. She also appreciates the lady's strong heart after she was left by her lover due to the difficulties on the way etc. She compares the heredity etc. of the lover with those of the lady to see whether the lady has chosen the suitable man. It is she who informs the parents of the girl's love-affair.

The next character is the friend of the hero who has no much role to play.[9] According to the commentators he is mostly a brahmin. He, as we have already seen, first discourages the hero from going after the girl. He helps the hero only once or twice. He can never approve of the secret meetings. But if the hero continues to meet her in secret he simply keeps quite.

The next character is the brahmins who also have a minor role to play.[10] This character may be one brahmin or a group of brahmins. They mostly occur as travellers who meet the hero and the heroine on their way when they go without the knowledge of the parents. They enumerate to the hero the dangers that may fall on them while they go. They will advise the lovers to stay in a nearby village. They will first dissuade the lovers and then let them go. When they meet the foster-mother who goes in search of the lovers they will advise her to return home explaining the nature of the way. They will inform her that the lovers have gone to a distant land and she will not be able to find them out.

These are the characters permitted by Tolkāppiyar in kaḷavu. The father, mother and the elder brother are reported characters and they will not directly appear(494).

We will now consider the characters prescribed by Tolkāppiyar in kaṟpu. As we have already noted the kaṟpu theme is a continuation of the kaḷavu theme and therefore it is natural that the characters found in

---

9. There is no separate mention of the occasions for the friend of the hero to speak either in Ahattiṉai or in kalaviyal.

10. Sūtra 42.

kaḷavu will be found in kaṟpu also. Tolkāppiyar prescribes in addition to the six characters another six characters in kaṟpu. The additional characters in kaṟpu are the bards, the male dancer, the female dancer, the concubine, learned men and passers-by (493).

The hero plays a significant part in kaṟpu also. Formerly he was a mere lover but after he married, his status is raised to that of a husband.[11] He is now free to meet his wife at any time of the day or night. He need not meet her in any secret place. Nobody will object to their meeting and the neighbourhood will not criticise their meeting. So he has a free mind and he moves with his wife peacefully. He is in ecstasy over the married life. He reconciles his wife if she feels sorry for any wrong committed by her in kaḷavu. He simply wonders how she could transform by her mere touch all objects into sweet ones. He teaches her how to behave with the respected persons and when she follows his advice he appreciates her. He takes a joy in recounting his adventures which he had to do in the kaḷavu stage. He is now particular that he should lead a pure life so as to expiate his wrong deeds done in kaḷavu. He consoles his wife when she fears that the wrong deeds done by her in kaḷavu may have effect on her kaṟpu life.

In spite of his will to lead a pure life he has to develop friendship with concubines and common girls.

---

11. The later part of the sūtra 43 mentions some of the characteristics of the kaṟpu hero. In kaṟpiyal the sūtra 144 gives a long list of occasions for the husband to speak.

So he is unable to keep his promises. He knows that he is at fault and so he falls at her tender feet praying for mercy for the degeneration of his character through his contact with another woman. He tries to passify his wife and attempts to end the love-quarrel. If his wife is adament and keeps him away he is distressed at heart. He repeatedly approaches her to satisfy her. If she is still persisting he mildly warns her of the effects if he were to leave her. He seems to be equally attached to his concubine or concubines. He is at times in an embarrassing position to satisfy his wife as well as the concubine.

He wishes to live with his wife without any separation but sometimes he may have to be separated from her for various reasons. He will have to do the job for his government and this will cause separation from her. He sometimes goes on embassy. He at times is determined to make money in foreign countries unmindful of the shortness of life,transitoriness of youth,the dangers to be met with in other countries. He also wishes to be benefited by higher studies in other countries. He may sometimes have to go to the war against his enemies. In all such circumstances he explains to his wife the fame and name he will get by such trips. If the wife is worried about him he speaks of his strength etc.

Although he is devoted to his duties in the foreign country he is unable to forget his wife. He very often thinks of his wife and speaks to himself about his wife. He could not control himself. He is waiting for an opportunity to return home to meet her. When he wants to return he chooses a very fine chariot with speedy horses. He asks the charioteer to drive the horses very speedily. In fact the horses are very swift

like his mind and they can take him home without any delay even if the distance is very far.

He returns home and relates his happy and sorrowful experiences to his wife with joy and tear. He leads a life according to the precepts of dharma. He knows his responsibility to produce a son through his wife and gets a son to continue his line.

The next character in kaṟpu is the lady-love who has now become a responsible wife.[12] She creates awe in his mind through her keen sense of duty. She treads the paths of virtue in her married life. She seeks very often the advice of her husband for the wrong acts she committed in kaḷavu. She tries to cook delicious dishes for her husband.

She is very much worried to see that her husband has developed contacts with other ladies. She is unable to bear his separation and she cannot control her passion. She spends sleepless nights with the companionship of the pillows. She even insults her husband with wounding words not to approach her. She asks him to go away on his standing before her. She scolds her husband under the pretext of scolding her son.

She shows her anger in her sarcastic remarks. She prostrates before her husband and says ironically that his words will please his concubine rather than herself. When the husband stays at home she asks him to go to the concubine in a mood of anger. She is unable to tolerate her son playing with the concubine.

---

12. Sūtra 145 gives some occasions for the wife to speak.

She does not like the concubine to decorate her son with ornaments. She is temporarily angry with her son for having gone to the house of the concubine. She even reviles the concubine for being friendly with her husband.

She never tries to yield to her husband when he returns after the union with the concubine. She does not allow him to embrace her. She cannot continue her anger when her husband tells her that he will go elsewhere if she is like that. She comes down to terms with him. She consults her friends and tells her that her husband is friendly with the concubine. But she will never reveal things which will lower her dignity.

She tries to check the husband by reminding the deep and high promises he made to her when they used to meet in kaḷavu. This will try to make him think seriously. Tolkāppiyar allows the wife to say even harsh words to her husband. When she leaves her anger she suggests it to her husband.

Sometimes she feels sorry for the concubine and allows her to live with her in the same apartment. In such circumstances she receives the concubine with due honours. When she finds her husband in troubled condition due to some causes she even takes up the role of a mother and admonishes him and embraces him. She may quarrel with her husband or with the concubine and she may even share her secret with her friend but the wife will never disclose her husband's objectionable ways to outsiders. The wife will never speak high of herself under normal circumstances to her husband.

She will not easily give her consent for him to go to foreign countries. He will have to force her politely to obtain her consent. She never reveals her difficulties to her husband when he is in the war field.

She sends word to her husband that she has finished her monthly course and suggests to him that it is time for him to come and stay with her for another twelve days in order to produce a son through her. He is also dutiful and comes to live with her even if he is spending his time in the house of the concubine.

She goes with her husband to spend their time sportively in rivers, tanks and gardens. She knows that the real fruit of her married life is to live a chaste and dharmic life. She is prepared to leave with her husband to forests after she has enjoyed life for a certain number of years.

She is always proud of her husband that he is a learned man. Therefore she has no intentional anger or hatred towards him. She always obeys him and she thinks that it is her duty to be so.

The lady - love's friend who has now become the wife's friend[13] has no prominent role to play in kaṟpu. She was a very important person in kaḷavu and both the hero and the heroine were depending on her in kaḷavu. But in kaṟpu they do not need her help any more. The wife's friend is not really worried about this unimportance. Even at the kaḷavu stage she was constantly reminding the hero to get the lady married

13. Sūtra 148.

at the earliest opportunity. She seems to be an ideal woman who will not mind her position.

She is really more happy than the lovers that the trial period is over now. She has been making vows and prayers to various gods that her friend should escape public criticism and settle down in life. Now her sincere prayers have been answered and she reminds the wife and the husband that they should go to fulfil their promises and vows to gods.

She consoles her friend when the wife suspects the character of her husband and reminds the husband that he has important duties to his wife. She helps the husband to meet the wife in a proper mood when he returns after the company of the concubine. She tells the husband that he is wrongfully engaged in outside sportive activities. She tells the husband that he has to produce a son through his wife. When she notices that the wife has lost all her charm and physique due to separation from him she demands that he is responsible for her loss and he should somehow restore it to her.

She says to the wife that she need not be ashamed of her husband's contact with concubines. She politely reminds the husband that he used to teach his wife to follow the ways of the great but he has now fallen from the ideal. She ends the love-quarrel of the husband and the wife. She even scolds the wife in order to bring her to terms. She tells the husband that he was an object of veneration in kaḷavu and by his conduct he made himself an object of sympathy in kaṛpu. When the outsiders like the bards come to intercede she objects to them. When the husband

again goes to the house of the concubine she merci-lessly prevents him from seeking the company of the concubines. She advises him to lead a happy life with his wife. She explains to him the wife's difficulties on account of separation from him.

We will now consider the character of the concu-bine.[14] She is of course a lady who is not married to him legally. But she is not to be mistaken for an ordinary common girl. She has all virtues of a wife except that she is not his wife. Therefore Tolkāppiyar has given her the status of a character in literature.

The concubine is equally worried to be separated from the hero. She is unable to bear his separation when he is with his wife. She cannot keep quite and slander the action of her lover and his wife. She always takes a delight to play with the son of her lover. She gives ornaments to the son of her lover and decorates him with the ornaments. Without any hatred towards the son she embraces him. Sometimes she is very good that she takes up the role of the foster - mother and tries to bring about the union with the husband and wife.

The number of concubines seems to be more than one as allowed by Tolkāppiyar. The concubines spoken of by Tolkāppiyar have a close resemblance to the concubines occurring in Sanskrit tradition. For example, the concubine Vasantasena of Mṛcchakaṭika will very often come to the mind of the readers when they read about the concubines of Tolkāppiyam.

---

14. This has reference to sūtra 149.

Tolkāppiyar does not allot much work for the foster-mother in the kaṟpu theme. He says that the foster-mother has the right to advise the heroine what she should do in the present and future and what she should avoid.

The learned men have some role to play here. They are also entitled to advise the heroine in the same way the foster-mother would do. Since the husband and wife obey their words they are entitled to set them right even forcibly if they go wrong.

As the kaṟpu theme allows the husband to develop contact with the concubines and as the wife is permitted to have love-quarrel with her husband the characters of interceders are introduced in the kaṟpu theme. They have a prominent duty to effect cordial relationship between the husband and the wife. The interceders are of many types. The chief interceders are enumerated by Tolkāppiyar as the wife's friend, the foster-mother, brahmin, husband's friend, he-bard, she-bard, young servants, guests, male dancers, female dancers, learned men and passers-by. All these have the duty of creating amicability between the two through pleasing words. They are normally expected to avoid harsh words but if need arises they may use them in the hearing distance of the husband and the wife but out of their sight. They must speak plainly their views. They may have deliberations among themselves. They are not entitled to speak about the objectionable conduct of the husband before his wife. They may slightly unnerve the wife if she prolongs her love-quarrel. They may directly address the husband and the wife in the beginning of their mediation but they will use third person at the later half of their mediation.

The kūttars who are male dancers are used to quote previous instances, to speak highly of their union, to end their love-quarrel in diverse ways by convincing them of the aim of life, to correct their thoughts, to tell them what their action will lead to, to tell them why they should give their consent for the union. When the husband is in the company of the concubines the kūttars may go in search of the husband and explain to him the condition of his wife. The he-bards also have this right.

The youngsters are those who do personal service to the husband. When the occasion demands they will take up the role of interceders.

The brahmins are used to tell the husband of his amorous condition and of what is worthy of him, to openly express in words his mind and to encourage him to proceed or discourage him from proceeding on account of good or bad omens.

In addition to these characters Tolkāppiyar allots some role to some more characters in kaḷavu and kaṟpu. They are: villagers, neighbours, the residents of the street, those who are in the know of the different stages of the love-affair, the father of the heroine and her elder brother. These characters do not appear on the scene directly in literature but they are only reported by the other characters.

CHAPTER

4

The Concept of Physical Manifestations

Tolkāppiyam has a chapter on Meyppāḍu in which meyppāḍus are dealt with. The word meyppāḍu means 'physical gestures or manifestations or expressions of feelings'. From the usage of the word in Tolkāppiyam we can understand that it is used to mean what is conveyed by the Sanskrit term bhāva.[1] The word meyppāḍu is used in a broad sense to denote vibhāva, anubhāva, sātvikabhāva, vyabhicāribhāva and sthāyibhāva.[2] The Tamil

1. For a general discussion on the bhāvas in Sanskrit poetics see B. Jaitly's article in the Principles of Literary Criticism in Sanskrit, pp. 102–113.

2. The Sanskrit term bhāva means feeling or emotion. Vibhāvas are of two kinds, ālambana and uddīpana. The characters of the literature are ālambana vibhāvas. The environmental factors that excite an emotion e. g. the stage setting, Spring season, the lonely place etc., are uddīpana vibhāvas. The effects like the sidelong glances, sweet words are the anubhāvas. The vyabhicāribhāvas are transitory mental states that accompany and help to intensify the sthāyibhāvas. They are also called sañcāribhāvas. A list of the vyabhicāribhāvas as accepted by the Sanskrit tradition will be given in a following footnote. The sātvikabhāvas are those which are the involuntary products of sympathetic realization of the feeling of the person portrayed. They arise from the heart which is ready to appreciate the sorrows or joys of another. They are eight in number as follows: 1. Paralysis, 2. Sweating, 3. Horripulation, 4. Change of voice, 5. Trembling, 6. Change of colour, 7. Weeping and 8. Fainting. The sthāyibhāvas are those that are permanently stationed in all beings. They are eight or nine in number.

word meyppāḍu, as used by Tolkāppiyar, means some more bhāvas for which Sanskrit has no parallels.

The exhibition of these bhāvas by the actors in a play is absolutely necessary to convey the feelings that the dramatist and the actors wish to express to the spectators. The description of these bhāvas by the poet in a poetry is equally indispensable to make the readers experience what the poet intends to convey to the readers. In the dramatic performance the able actors take upon themselves the responsibility of exhibiting the bhāvas as required by the dramatist. In the poetic composition the poet has to describe the physical manifestations in appropriate words and sentences. Therefore the meyppāḍus are needed not only for the dramatic performances but also for the poetic expressions. For this reason Tolkāppiyar has included a chapter on Meyppāḍu and talks about them in a detailed manner in that chapter. Also, he explicitly states that meyppāḍu is an integral part of poetry.

Will it not be possible to convey the intended feelings in literature without the meyppāḍus ? In this connection we must take into consideration the fact that literature is essentially nothing but a peculiar reflection of life. When we enact or describe a particular situation in literature we must set it exactly in a similar situation that the practical life would have it. For example, we are describing in a poetry that a particular man has to face a tiger suddenly in a helpless condition. We may describe the situation saying that the man was terribly frightened. This would perhaps make the reader understand the feeling of fear that the man had or we want to convey. But if we choose to

describe in detail the mental condition of the man as manifested by his physical expressions, the effect we create in the mind of the reader would be more deep. We must say that the man's body began to tremble, he perspired profusely and his body became pale and so on. This type of description will be more effective than the mere use of the word 'fear'. The word 'fear' alone cannot cause fear in anybody. The reader should be presented with the detailed descriptions that are normally associated with this situation in life. The real purpose of poetry or drama is to create a vivid and deep impression in the readers by such delineations. Therefore Tolkāppiyar adds a separate chapter on meyppāḍu.

Before we go to study the concept of meyppāḍu in Tolkāppiyam it is necessary to remember an important fact. In Sanskrit the bhāvas are closely associated with the theory of rasa. The earliest available authority on this subject namely Bharata mentions about the bhāvas only to explain the theory of rasa. According to Bharata the bhāvas are very important in literature but they are significant only in relation to the concept of rasa. Bharata mentions about five varieties of bhāvas namely the vibhāva, anubhāva, vyabhicāribhāva, sātvikabhāva and sthāyibhāva. In his famous rasa-sūtra he says that the rasa is nothing but the sthāyibhāva excited by the vibhāva, anubhāva and sthāyibhāva.[3] Thus in Bharata all the bhāvas are intrinsically interrelated.

3. According to Bharata the sthāyibhāvas that are stationed in all the cultured critics get excited by witnessing the proper combination of the vibhāvas, anubhāvas and vyabhicāribhāvas. As a result of the excitement the sthāyibhāvas flow out as rasas. Therefore the difference between the sthāyibhāvas and the rasas is only their

In Tolkāppiyam there is a long list of meyppāḍus but no attempt is made either to relate the meyppāḍus to rasa or to interrelate them by a comprehensive theory. Tolkāppiyar classifies the meyppāḍus into different types but the classification is not on qualitative considerations. The meyppāḍus are divided according to the context in which they are to be described. For example, those meyppāḍus that are found associated with the heroine during her meeting the hero in kaḷavu are enumerated in one set and the meyppāḍus that are related to the heroine after her deep and devoted love are listed in another set and so on. Thus Tolkāppiyar's basis of meyppāḍu divison is contextual rather than qualitative. As such the meyppāḍus of Tolkāppiyam cannot be exactly equated individually with the vibhāva, anubhāva etc. But at the same time we cannot say that there is no connection between the Tamil and Sanskrit concepts. It would therefore be more appropriate to relate them as similiar concepts but not identical concepts[4].

Tolkāppiyar opens the chapter on meyppāḍu saying that the thirty-two things appearing in literature may be reduced to sixteen(245). He does not explain what these thirty-two things are and how they can be reduced to sixteen. He also does not say what is the necessity to reduce the thirty-two to sixteen. In the

---

condition whether they are in excited condition or not. When they flow out they become rasas and when they are remaining idle they are sthāyibhāvas. It must be remembered that the sthāyibhāvas must be properly excited to become rasas. If they are not properly excited they turn out to be rasābhāsa and bhāvābhāsa which mean semblance of rasa or bhāva.

4. For some interesting remarks on the meyppāḍus and the Sanskrit bhāvas see the article of P. Thirugnanasambandhan in P. F. C. T. S. Vol. II, pp. 10–18.

second sūtra of the chapter (246) he says that the sixteen can further be reduced to eight. Here also he adds no explanations. Fortunately the two commentators, Iḷampūraṇar[5] and Pērāśiriyar[6] come to our rescue. According to them the number thirty-two is obtained by multiplying eight by four. The eight are the eight principles starting with nahai which are listed in the third sūtra. The four referred to here are explained this way: when a man happens to meet a young girl in a proper atmosphere they look at each other and as a result of this meeting both experience some peculiar feelings in their mind. These new and sudden feelings in them cause some effects on their bodies.

The object looked at is called śuvaipporuḷ which means the object of enjoyment. The act of seeing etc. is named poṟiuṇarvu which means sense-perception. The feeling which is resulted by sense-perception is termed maṉakkuṟippu and the peculiar modification of the physical body which is the result of this maṉakkuṟippu is known as viṟal. These four things namely the śuvaipporuḷ, poṟiuaṇrvu, maṉakkuṟippu and viṟal are common to the eight principles listed in the third sūtra. Thus the number thirty-two is obtained.

Now let us see how this thirty-two can be reduced to sixteen and eight. As long as the hero and the heroine remain without meeting, there is no possibility of sense - perception. Therefore the two namely śuvaipporuḷ and poṟiuṇarvu may be taken to be one

---

5. Ilam. Com. p. 359–360.

6. Pērā. Com. p. 1 ff.

principle. Similarly, if there is no mental feeling as a result of sense-perception there is no scope for external physical manifestations. Thus manakkurippu and viral may be taken to be one principle. This is how the thirty-two are reduced to sixteen.

We will now see how the sixteen is reduced to eight. Although the four principles śuvaipporuḷ etc. are important individually with reference to nahai etc. finally all these principles exist only for the eight principles starting with nahai. And so the eight are ultimately significant. Thus the number eight is obtained.

Although Tolkāppiyar does not say why he adopts the method of reduction we may guess that his early or contemporary literary critics might have held that thirty-two or sixteen principles are independently important. Therefore Tolkāppiyar wishes to show them the significance of the eight principles ultimately.

Tolkāppiyar names the eight main principles (247) as follows: nahai (hāsya), aḻukai (karuṇa), iḷivaral (bībhatsa), maruṭkai (adbhuta), accam (bhayānaka), perumitam (vīra), vehuḷi (raudra), and uvahai (śṛṅgāra).

It is somewhat difficult to conclude whether Tolkāppiyar uses these terms to mean the respective rasas denoted by these words or the sthāyibhāvas.[7]

7. 'Tholkāppiyar chose the term Meippāḍu which primarily denotes certain physical expressions, to connote what may be called sthāyibhāvas........that are the antecedent complements of such physical expressions; whereas Bharata chose the term bhāva which primarily denotes a psychic state but also connotes the physical state that accompanies it.' P. Thirugnanasambandhan, op. cit. p. 14.

He names them meyppāḍu. It is very interesting to note that the list of meyppāḍus as found in Tolkāppiyam strangely coincides with the list found in Bharata even though there is no agreement between the order of the words.[8] It is not known whether Tolkāppiyar enumerates the meyppāḍus in this order with any intention but Pērāśiriyar gives his own reasons for the order.[9]

Whatever might be the reason for the order of enumeration it appears to be strange to see that Tolkāppiyar should give unimportance to vīra and śṛṅgāra by mentioning them either in the middle of the list or at the end. The entire Śaṅgam literature is full of only these two rasas. Therefore we may guess that even in the age of Tolkāppiyam the rasas should have got their due places.

After naming the eight main meyppāḍus Tolkāppiyar divides them each into four.[10] Thus again the number thirty-two is obtained. It may appear to be glaring contradiction to reduce first the principles to eight and again multiply them by four to get thirty-two principles. But this appears to be a contradiction only from the superficial point of view. On close examination this will disappear. Earlier,

---

8. Bharata's list is as follows: Love, Humour, Compassion, Horror, Heroic, Fear, Awesome and Wonder. For an account of the various bhāvas individually associated with these rasas see Adya Rangacarya, Bharata's Nāṭya-Śāstra, p. 73f. P. Thirugnanasambandhan following Prof. Indushekar thinks that Bharata also might be a southerner. This cannot be established. Vide P. F. C. T. S. Vol. II, p. 11-12.

9. Pērā. Com. p. 5f.

10. 'But certainly we cannot limit the number of such factors to four only. They are meseems to be taken only as illustrative and not exhaustive.' P. Thirugnanasambandhan, op. cit. p. 15.

Tolkāppiyar, according to the commentators, reduced the eight meyppāḍus not from the same principle. Previously the thirty-two śuvaipporuḷ, poṟiuṇarvu, maṉakkuṟippu and viṟal are comprised into eight major meyppāḍus. Here the major meyppāḍus are subdivided into thirty-two for some other reason.

According to Tolkāppiyar (248) hāsya or nahai is caused by the four namely mockery, childishness, ignorance and credulity. The sources of karuṇa or aḻukai are (249) contemptible treatment, loss (of property or life), change for the worse and poverty. The iḷivaral or bībhatsa (250) is the outcome of old age, disease, pain and low status. The maruṭkai or adbhuta results from (251) newness, greatness, littleness and transformation. The accam or bhayāṇaka (252) is born of evil spirits, wild animals, thieves and respectful persons. The bases of perumitam or vīra (253) are scholarship, bravery, fame and liberality. The origins of vehuḷi or raudra are (254) the extremely painful cutting of the limbs, destruction of family, plunder and murder. Love, enjoyment of pleasures (like beauty etc.), sexual union and sport (in the garden etc.) create the meyppāḍu uvahai or śṛṅgāra (255).[11]

It may be noted that there is a vast difference here in the Tamil and Sanskrit traditions. In Sanskrit although many types of bhāvas such as vibhāva etc. are mentioned, no bhāva causes the other. All

11. 'It is however significant that in regard to the last Tholkāppiyar's concept is wider comprising in its fold a sense of joy and fulfilment arising not only from the companionship of man and woman in which restricted sense Bharata uses the term 'Rati', but also enjoyment arising out of the possession of wealth, imparting of knowledge and sports. This indeed covers a wider range of life but Bharata's emotions on conjugal life alone can be explained as that being the one source of supreme joy available for man on earth and one capable of universal application.' P. Thirugnanasambandhan, op. cit. p. 16.

the bhāvas induce the sthāyibhāvas to get them excited so that they will become for the time being rasas. But in the Tamil tradition the eight meyppāḍus are caused by their respective meyppāḍus. It may therefore be explained that the mockery etc. enumerated above are the situations described in literature which induce the corresponding meyppāḍus in the mind of the readers. If explained like this the mockery etc. do not become real causes of nahai etc. and they remain only inducers like in the Sanskrit tradition.

After the mention of the principal eight meyppāḍus and their subdivisions Tolkāppiyar goes to enumerate (256) another thirty-two meyppāḍus. He remarks here that while the previous set is on one side the following list is on the other side. This simply means that he is giving another set of meyppāḍus which may be considered to be parallel. Tolkāppiyar does not explain why he is inclined to supply a parallel list besides the previous one. Tolkāppiyar also remarks at the end of the sūtra that there are some meyppāḍus here which may be included in some of the meyppāḍus of the previous list. He further says that these meyppāḍus occur when the previous ones are not occurring. The exact significance of these remarks is not known and the commentators are not very helpful in this regard. A close study of the meyppāḍus given in the two lists will reveal to us that they cannot be considered to be capable of replacing each other. In fact the meyppāḍus of the previous list are peculiar to Tamil tradition and no such parallel conception could be traced in Sanskrit tradition. As explained earlier, the meyppāḍus of the previous list may be generally held to be equivalents of vibhāva etc. in the sense that they help the excitement

of the nahai etc. They cannot be real equivalents. The list which we shall consider now may be held to contain close equivalents to the list of vyabhicāribhāvas as held by Sanskrit tradition even though it may be difficult to connect all of them fully.

It may be mentioned in this connection that in Sanskrit thirty-three or thirty-four vyabhicāribhāvas are enumerated.[12] Nearly twenty of the meyppāḍus of Tolkāppiyar can be directly connected with the Sanskrit list and the rest may somehow be related.[13] Therefore Tolkāppiyar's second list of meyppāḍus can be said to be what is known in Sanskrit as vyabhicāribhāvas. It is really strange that Pērāśiriyar who is well acquainted with the Sanskrit tradition has not shown this striking similarities between the vyabhicāribhāvas and the meyppāḍus given in the following list. We will now consider the list of meyppāḍus given by Tolkāppiyar in his second list. 1. the feeling of ownership, 2. the feeling of satisfaction, 3. the state of equipoise, 4. the act of grace, 5. remaining in one's own nature, 6. modesty, 7. right conduct, 8. affection, 9. exceeding the bounds, 10. tormenting others, 11. pondering, 12. wishing health, 13. feeling shy, 14. sleep, 15. blabbering, 16. dream, 17. feeling disgusted,

---

12. They are as follows: 1. Discouragement, 2. Weakness, 3. Apprehension, 4. Envy, 5. Intoxication, 6. Weariness, 7. Indolence, 8. Depression, 9. Anxiety, 10. Distraction, 11. Recollection, 12. Contentment, 13. Shame, 14. Inconstancy, 15. Joy, 16. Agitation, 17. Stupor, 18. Arrogance, 19. Despair, 20. Impatience, 21. Sleeping, 22. Epilepsy, 23. Dreaming, 24. Awakening, 25. Indignation, 26. Dissimulation, 27. Cruelty, 28. Assurance, 29. Sickness, 30. Insanity, 31. Death, 32. Fright, and 33. Deliberation.

13. P. Thirugnanasambandhan in his article quoted above shows the relationship of nearly 12 meyppāḍus to the Sanskrit Vyabhicāribhāvas (p. 17). He also remarks that some meyppāḍus like Uṭaimai, tanmai etc., have no Sanskrit parallels.

18. remembering the past, 19. slight anger, 20. sluggishness, 21. thinking mood, 22. deliberation, 23. haste, 24. sighing, 25. sense of disappointment, 26. suffering, 27. forgetting mood, 28. jealousy, 29. perspiration, 30. indecisive nature, 31. audacity and 32. tremor.

Although Tolkāppiyar has several lists of contextually different meyppāḍus he does not employ different terms to denote the different types of meyppāḍus. He simply calls all of them meyppāḍus. It seems it would have been more clear if different terms were used to indicate the various types.[14]

So far Tolkāppiyar was concerned with the meyppāḍus that are common to the love situations and to the heroic situations. Henceforth Tolkāppiyar (257—262) devotes himself to the enumeration of those meyppāḍus which are peculiar only to the love situations. Even here Tolkāppiyar takes up first the meyppāḍus of kaḷavu and divides them into six stages. The six stages are again subdivided into four each and thus twenty-four more meyppāḍus are added here. We have already seen that the love theme prescribed by Tolkāppiyar starts with the description of the first meeting of the lovers and ends with the marriage or eloping of the lovers. The six stages are distributed within the limits of the love theme.

---

14. P. Thirugnanasambandhan (op. cit. p. 15) seems to justify Tolkāppiyar in not making any distinction between the sthāyibhāvas and the vyabhicāribhāvas. It is true that the sthāyibhāva of one rasa can become a vyabhicāribhāva of another. For example, Love or rati is a sthāyibhāva of śṛngāra rasa but it can become a vyabhicāribhāva of vīra. Moreover, one rasa or sthāyibhāva can subordinate itself to another rasa or sthāyibhāva. But that does not mean that there is no need to make any distinction between them.

Before we go to consider the meyppāḍus of the six stages it may be pointed out that all the twenty-four meyppāḍus of the six stages are taking place only with reference to the lady-love. Although the hero also may manifest some physical expressions, Tolkāppiyar does not seem to be interested in prescribing the meyppāḍus in relation to the hero. The reason seems to be clear. In love-affairs, only the girls feel the delicacy of situations. And therefore their reactions will be more and interesting. So, Tolkāppiyar prescribes the meyppāḍus only with reference to the heroines.

The first stage consists of the following four meyppāḍus: 1. meeting the look (of the lover), 2. having the perspired forehead, 3. controlling the laugh, and 4. not exposing her weakness to others. In the second stage the followings occur: 5. loosening the hair, 6. setting right the ear-ornament, 7. moving the ornaments here and there and 8. loosening the dress and tightening it. These four belong to the third stage: 9. placing the hand on the middle part of her body, 10. bringing the ornaments to their original position, 11. pretending to be strong and 12. raising both the hands. In the fourth stage these will happen: 13. speaking in appreciative terms, 14. speaking beyond the region of credulity, 15. feeling shy for the public scandal and 16. receiving whatever given. The fifth stage has the following: 17. giving her consent after deliberation, 18. avoiding sport with friends etc., 19. choosing solitude, and 20. feeling happy on seeing the lover. The sixth stage consists of the following: 21. not relishing the ornaments done to the body

22. appearing dejected, 23. speaking with a disturbed mind, and 24. speaking in utter disappointment.

After enumerating the twenty-four meyppāḍus which are peculiar only to kaḷavu, Tolkāppiyar gives in a separate list (266) twenty more meyppāḍus which may be described in both kaḷavu and kaṟpu themes. The twenty meyppāḍus which are common to kaḷavu and kaṟpu themes are as follows: 1. averseness towards pleasures, 2. soliloquy in suffering, 3. expressing one's grief visualising the object of love, 4. consideration of the impediments, 5. fasting, 6. spreading of beauty spots on the skin, 7. consuming small quantity of food, 8. emaciation of the body, 9. sleeplessness, 10. perplexity in dream, 11. doubting the veracity of the words of the object of love, 12. coming to the conclusion that the words are true, 13. doubting his meeting, 14. feeling happy at the sight of his relatives, 15. finding fault with the god of Dharma, 16. piteous expression of one's feelings, 17. finding the point of comparison between any object and the object of love, 18. feeling happy that there is a point of comparison, 19. feeling happy on hearing the name or fame of the lover and 20. confusion of mind.

The following eight more meyppāḍus are enumerated by Tolkāppiyar (267) which will be having scope in the kaṟpu theme. 1. admonition when there is an obstacle, 2. controlling anger, 3. evading on account of fear, 4. avoiding union, 5. not feeling angry with messengers etc., 6. pretending to sleep, 7. being overpowered by passion, and 8. keeping silent.

It has already been mentioned that in the kaṟpu theme the heroine will lead a contended life although

her peace of mind will temporarily be disturbed by the act of her husband who will develop contacts with concubines. Therefore the following ten meyppāḍus are prescribed by Tolkāppiyar (268) in addition to the previous ones. They are as follows: 1. fearing God, 2. discerning the correct Dharma, 3. feeling angry towards the lover for some imaginary wrong in him, 4. not being disposed to accept the real favour shown by the lover, 5. telling the truth at the time of union, 6. rejecting at the unsuitable time, 7. being in ecstasy on account of ease of mind, 8. openly showing the height of her love, 9. not being able to put up with separation, and 10. saving the husband from public scandal.

Before we end this chapter we may have to point out an important fact found in the conception of meyppāḍu in Tolkāppiyam. We may fully agree with Tolkāppiyar when he enumerates the actual physical expressions like sweating etc. as meyppāḍus. But in the various lists cited above we will see that even speeches by the heroine and others have been included as forming part of the meyppāḍu group. One wonders as to how speeches which are to be considered oral can be included here. Of course speech is also a physical expression of the inner emotions but can we call it physical for that reason?

It is very interesting that in Sanskrit tradition too the speech expression is considered to be physical in one sense.[15] But, for this reason all speeches cannot be termed technically to be physical. Tolkāppiyar

---

15. It is interesting to note in this connection that Bharata also considers speech as one of the abhinayas which mean acting. He uses this word

also does not group all speeches under meyppāḍu. He very often refers to the speeches by the hero, heroine and other characters but they have nothing to do with his scheme of meyppāḍu. Then what is the criterion to distinguish the speech from meyppāḍu? If the speeches are mere expressions of inner thoughts they are 'speeches'. But if they are emotional outbursts of inner commotion and feeling they are certainly meyppāḍus. If we closely scrutinise the list of meyppāḍus in Tolkāppiyam we will see that only such emotional expressions have been listed under meyppāḍu. This appears to be justifiable.

It is really amazing that Tolkāppiyar who could subtly classify the various meyppāḍus into so many categories has surprisingly failed to form any theory out of the concept of meyppāḍu. He need not have left us in an ambiguous position to know whether his meyppāḍus mean bhāvas or rasas. If he had given us any hint to form any theory out of it, it would have been more pleasant. Unfortunately the commentators also have not proved to be very helpful in this regard.

---

in a very broad sense and includes speeches in vācika abhinaya. How can vācika which is oral become acting or physical? Bharata says that the word is derived etymologically from the root 'ni' to carry with the preposition 'abhi' meaning towards. That is, that which carries the emotions of the characters to the audience or to the reader. See for more details Adya Rangacharya, An Introduction to Bharata's Nāṭya Śāstra, p. 28.

CHAPTER

5

The Notion of Simile

Tolkāppiyam contains a chapter on simile (called in Tamil Uvamai) a study of which will reveal the ideas which the early Tamils had on this important aspect of literature. The reasons for including the chapter on simile in the Poruḷadhikāram are obvious. Although Tolkāppiyar includes this chapter in his work he does not explain the relationship of simile to literature. If Tolkāppiyar had added his remarks on the place of simile in literature we would be able to discuss this point thoroughly. In the absence of clear indication to know the mind of Tolkāppiyar it would be difficult to arrive at definite conclusions.

Anyway, the two commentators of Tolkāppiyam namely Iḷampūraṇar and Pērāśiriyar help us to take up a lively discussion on this matter. From the remarks found in these commentaries we may guess the nature of ideas held by the critics of this time. At the same time we cannot say how far the views held by Iḷampūraṇar and Pērāśiriyar represented the mind of Tolkāppiyar.

According to Iḷampūraṇar the simile has two purposes in literature. One is that the simile serves to make clear what is not known earlier. For example,

we do not know what a gavaya is. But if we say that it is an animal very similar to deer, we will be able to know what the gavaya is. Comparing the unknown gavaya to the known deer helps us to understand the unknown.[1] This is one purpose of simile. The other purpose, in the opinion of Iḷampūraṇar,[2] is that it becomes an alaṁkāra (known in Tamil as Aṇi) meaning ornament. By becoming an alaṁkāra it helps us to enjoy literature. When we compare the face of the lady to the lotus or the moon, we do not intend to introduce either the lotus or the moon or the face. All these are already known objects. Here the comparison serves to give enjoyment to the readers.

Pērāśiriyar seems to hold a different view on this subject. According to him[3] the simile cannot be held to be an alaṁkāra. The main reason that prompted Pērāśiriyar to advocate this view is this: we cannot name any principle as ornament to literature. If the poet is skilled, he will make any principle to be the ornament to his poetry. If the same principle is handled by unskilled poets it cannot become ornament. Instead, it may become an object of mockery. In the Śaṅgam literature even the dogs and toddy have been made objects of comparison. These comparisons are very enjoyable. What is normally rejected to be unfit for being objects of comparison namely dogs and toddy become relishing objects. So, we cannot reject the dogs and toddy to be objects of comparison nor can we include them under fitting objects of comparison.

1. Ilam. Com. p. 395.

2. Ibid.

3. pēra. Com. p. 108ff.

It is actually the ability and experience of the poets that choose or reject these objects. The critic has no role to play here. Pērāśiriyar[4] has another objection to making simile as an ornament to poetry. If ornament is a principle that adds beauty to poetry or literature, then besides simile there are many elements that add beauty to poetry. All these elements should be termed as ornaments and there is no reason why simile alone should be discusssed under alaṁkāras. Another point Pērāśiriyar raises in this connection is this: if simile is held to be an ornament in poetry, then it becomes an external element to poetry. For example, the gold and other ornaments we wear are not integral parts of ours. They are added externally and remain external objects. But the simile cannot be held to be external to literature. It is part and parcel of literature. For these reasons Pērāśiriyar is against including the simile as an ornament to literature.

If simile is not an alaṁkāra in poetry what is it? According to Pērāśiriyar[5] it is an element that helps the meaning of poetry to become more clear. As the meyppāḍus help the poet to describe the mind of the characters more effectively, similies also help the meaning to be understood in a more effective way. If at all the similies have any role to play in poetry it is to add clear meaning to the words and sentences of the poet.

---

4. Ibid, 109.

5. Pēar. Com. p. 58.

Although the views of Pērāśiriyar as represented above require deep consideration and have many interesting points it may be mentioned that there is no harm in holding the view that the simile is an ornament to poetry. Just because simile is named as ornament we need not actually and literally identify it with the ornament we wear on our body. It is an accepted fact that the comparison of any object to anything is not total. It is only a general and superficial comparison. The ornament we wear may be external to us but for that reason simile cannot become external to poetry. The comparison between the simile and our ornament is to tell the fact that the simile adds beauty to poetry in the same way as the ornaments add charm to the body. How can the simile add beauty to poetry? Adding beauty actually means making the meaning more clear and interesting. Though all the elements of poetry add charm to literature the beauty added by the alaṁkāras is different and peculiar only to the alaṁkāras. Therefore it is no harm to consider the simile to be a beautifying element of poetry.

It is now time to consider why Tolkāppiyar mentions only about the simile in his work. Although there is no indication by Tolkāppiyar as to why he is inclined to speak only about the simile, we may make conjectures regarding this. A study of the Śaṅgam literature will reveal the fact that in the Śaṅgam poetry many alaṁkāras are used besides Upamā. Therefore we should not think that during the time of Tolkāppiyar the knowledge of other alaṁkāras was absent. If that be the case why Tolkāppiyar mentions only the simile?

Many reasons may be adduced in this regard. It is an accepted fact that although there are several alaṁkāras enumerated in the works on Poetics all these are directly or indirectly based on the simile. Thus the simile may be held to be the mother of all the alaṁkāras.[6] Therefore, if simile is mentioned it may represent all the alaṁkāras. Secondly, many more new alaṁkāras may be invented and employed by the poets consciously or otherwise.[7] It is therefore never possible for any critic to exhaust all the alaṁkāras in his work. Even if a hundred alaṁkāras are treated in a work there may be several more. So, whatever might be the comprehensive nature of the treatment of alaṁkāras it has to remain incomplete. Instead of treating thousand alaṁkāras and leave it unfinished it is wise to mention the basis of all the alaṁkāras. Thirdly, a study of the chapter on simile in Tolkāppiyam reveals the fact that Tolkāppiyar is not interested in exhausting even all the varieties of simile. He mentions some of them and leaves others to the imagination of the critics and poets.

---

6. The contention that all the alaṁkāras are based on the simile may not be agreeable to all. In the Sanskrit tradition too there is difference of opinion regarding this. Of course, upamā is one of the earliest alaṁkāras recognised by the oldest authorities in this field. Bharata speaks about four alaṁkāras only and upamā is one among them. But there is no indication whether Bharata thought that upamā was more important than other alaṁkāras. In Bhāmaha's scheme of alaṁkāras upamā occupies only the 3rd place. Udbhaṭa also gives the same place to upamā. For Daṇḍin upamā occupies a place next to svabhāvokti. But there are some Sanskrit literary authorities who give more importance to upamā. For example, Vāmana thinks all figures as forms nothing more than aspects of upamā. But Udbhaṭa thinks that upamā is the basis for only 21 alaṁkāras. Appayya Dīkṣita would hold that only the upamā alaṁkāra takes up various roles and appears as different alaṁkāras. For more details see P. V. Kane, op. cit., S. K. De, Sanskrit Poetics (under relevant titles).

7. Normally in Sanskrit nearly 30 to 40 alaṁkāras are treated. But in Kuvalayānanda more than 100 alaṁkāras are discussed. This shows that more alaṁkāras may be discovered by literary authorities.

There is another fact to be noted in this connection. Many varieties of upamā which Tolkāppiyar defines are treated by the later Tamil critics as separate alaṁkāràs. This shows that even though Tolkāppiyar was aware of many alaṁkāras he would prefer to treat them as varieties of Upamā rather than different alaṁkāras. In fact we can accept the fact that the name of the alaṁkāra is not very important. What is more significant is the way in which the poet chooses to convey the meaning in a better suited manner.

It is opportunity now to give a brief history of alaṁkāra śāstra in Tamil. It may be mentioned at the outset that the contribution of the Tamils to the alaṁkāra śāstra is very poor. The only scholar who contributed something original to this branch of literature is Tolkāppiyar. After him no original author is to be found in Tamil. While Tolkāppiyar treats the alaṁkāras as a section of Poetics later Tamil scholars give more prominence to it and make it a separate branch of study. Next to Tolkāppiyam comes a work named Daṇḍialaṁkāram which is a translation of Sanskrit Kavyādarśa.[8] The gap between Tolkāppiyar and Daṇḍin is nearly 1500 years.[9] It appears to be very peculiar why and how the Tamils completely neglected this interesting branch of literature. We have no evidence to hold that any other contribution was

---

8. Although the Tamil Daṇḍiyalaṁkāram is generally considered as a translation there are many regional elements peculiar to Tamil tradition in the Tamil work. The present writer is presently engaged in collaboration with G. Vijayavenugopal, of the Tamil department of Madurai University, in studying the difference between the Sanskrit originals and the Tamil translations. The work will be released soon.

9. The Tamil Daṇḍiyalaṁkāram belongs to the 12th century.

made in the alaṁkāra branch in between Tolkāppiyar and Daṇḍin.

There are some texts on alaṁkāra in Tamil namely Vīrasōḷiyam[10], Māṟanalaṁkāram[11], Kuvalayānandam[12] and some other minor works. All of them are either translations or adaptations of Sanskrit works. A close study of Kamban and other very great Tamil poets would perhaps reveal many new alaṁkāras which are not found mentioned in Sanskrit tradition. But no such proper study has so far been taken by competent scholars.

Now we shall engage ourselves in the study of the chapter on Upamā in Tolkāppiyam. The word uvamai as employed by Tolkāppiyar denotes both upamā (simile) and upamāna (the object to which the object on hand is compared). From the context we may have to determine the meaning. In the Poruḷadhikāram Tolkāppiyar speaks about two major types of upamā and they are named by him Uḷḷuṟai and Uvamai. The former is more closely associated with the suggestive elements in poetry and therefore the former type requires a detailed treatment in a separate chapter in this work. The other type named as Uvamai is the equivalent term for upamā in Sanskrit. In this chapter we will study only the upamā of the explicit type.

Here too the two commentators Iḷampūraṇar and Pērāśiriyar differ. Their difference is regarding the

---

10. 11th century.

11. 16th century.

12. 19th century.

actual content of the chapter on upamā in Tolkāppiyam. According to Iḷampūraṇar the entire chapter on upamā deals with the ordinary type of upamā. On this assumption he interprets all the sūtras of this chapter. On the other hand, Pērāśiriyar thinks 'that some of the sūtras of this chapter in Tolkāppiyam refers to the other type of upamā namely the suggestive-upamā. As the sūtras are very helpless in this regard we are unable to conclude which of the commentators is right. We will assume that both are correct and take their explanations at suitable places in this work.

In the beginning of the chapter (272) Tolkāppiyar says that the simile is based on four principles namely action, effect, quality and colour. Pērāśiriyar explains that there is a reason why Tolkāppiyar should mention the action etc. in this order. According to him[13] the effect happens only after action. Therefore effect is mentioned after action. Without the appearance of quality i. e. form, there is no possibility for colour and so colour is mentioned after quality. Iḷampūraṇar does not say anything about the order of the words but he offers explanation on some other point. According to him[14] upamā is of two kinds namely that which can be seen by the eyes and that which can be understood only by ear, tongue, nose, skin, and mind. In Tolkāppiyam there is no clue to such classifications.

When two things or persons are compared with some other objects or persons the comparison may be to stress either the action or the other three mentioned

---

13. Pērā. Com. p. 58.
14. Ilam. Com, p. 395.

in the sūtra (272) of Tolkāppiyar. For example, when we say that the soldier is like tiger, here the comparison is to stress the action of the tiger and that of the soldier. The meaning is that the soldier acts so swiftly and boldly as the tiger would do. Therefore this is based on action. Similarly when the hand of the donar is compared to the rain the comparison is to show that the effect of the rain and the donor is same. That is, both of them give profusely. This is therefore a simile of effect. When the middle portion of the lady is compared to damaruka the comparison is to point out the physical similarity between them. This thus becomes a comparison of quality or form. To illustrate the last variety we may say that the body is like gold. Here we have in mind the similarity of colour existing in both of them. Hence it is an example of simile of colour.

Tolkāppiyar mentions in this connection that it is not necessary to restrict to only one comparison in a poem. In the same poem action, effect, quality and colour may be compared with.

In Tolkāppiyam (275, 276) we find another interesting division of the upamās. He says that the simile is born out of five causes namely superiority, beauty, affection, heroism and inferiority. In this connection we ask ourselves the question : what is the actual difference in saying that the upamā is based on certain principles as explained in the previous case and saying that the upamās are born out of certain principles. Is there any logical justification in having the two sets of classifications like this? The last set of upamās was based on the aim of the poet and the present set is based on the reason which prompted the

poet to make the simile. So, Tolkāppiyar's division of upamās is logical and justifiable.

Let us now see the examples for the second set. To illustrate the upamā born of superiority the following stanza is given: The assemblage of the three (eternally quarrelling Tamil kings) in a particular place leaving all their enmity is like the rare combination of the nṛtta, gīta and vādya. Here the poet thinks that this particular occasion is superior to all occasions because of the rare combination. Therefore the superiority is the cause which gives rise to the simile. As an example to the second variety the following line is given: the city is like a picture. Here the city is compared to a picture because the poet is impelled by the beauty of the city. So, the cause of this simile is beauty. The third variety is illustrated this way: 'There is a person like my eyes.' This is a saying by the lady-love with reference to the hero. She compares the hero to her eyes because she loves him so much. The simile is caused by the love or affection of the lady-love. To illustrate the fourth class this is given: The king Tirumāvaḷavan is like a lion. Here the comparison is born out of the heroism of the king.

In explaining the fifth cause there is difference of opinion between Iḷampūraṇar and Pērāśiriyar and consequently the illustration they give differs. According to Iḷampūraṇar[15] when the upamāna becomes upameya it is an example of inferiority. But Pērāśiriyar[16] says when a normally beautiful object while it has

15. Ilam. Com. p. 399.

16. Pērā. Com. p. 66.

undergone temporarily a less beautiful stage, is compared, it is an example of this class. We will see the illustration. The heroine who is suffering very much on account of separation from her lover and who has temporarily lost her beauty is like the moon at the time of being swallowed by Rāhu. Here the moon is an example of upamā born of inferiority.

We shall now see some practical hints given by Tolkāppiyar to use the simile in poetry and literature. He says that the simile selected for comparison should always be of superior nature (274). The only exception being the fifth variety of upamā mentioned above. In all other places the upamāna should always be superior in the sense that it is better known than the upameya and more beautiful. In selecting the upameya another principle which is to be kept in mind is that the upamāna and upameya should be fitting to be compared with(279). Tolkāppiyar also sanctions(277) that the whole and the part may be compared to each other. In the time of Tolkāppiyar the poets might have had a doubt whether only wholes can be compared to wholes and parts to parts. To remove the doubt Tolkāppiyar says that wholes can be compared either to wholes or parts, and parts to parts or wholes. Also he says that the upameya consisting of a noun and an adjunct should have an upamāna consisting of a noun and an adjunct.

Tolkāppiyar gives another important hint to the poets. Earlier he said that the upamāna and upameya should be of equal degree. Now he makes an exception to that rule (281). Sometime too big an object or too low an object is found compared to a normal upameya. For example, in a stanza the two breasts of a girl are

compared to the boundless desires of the people. In another stanza the tresses and forehead of a girl are compared to the sea and the moon just rising from the sea. In another poem somebody is compared to the dog. In such cases we can discern that too big things and too low things are employed as objects of comparison. Whether we can allow such similies is the question. Tolkāppiyar says that such cases are permitted if the poet is able to employ them suitably and if they will give delight to the readers.

Tolkāppiyar also gives a list of some words which he calls upamā vācakas (282). In this list thirty-six words are enumerated. Of the thirty-six he distributes eight each to the similies starting with action mentioned above. He prescribes that only the particular vācakas should be used with reference to each variety of simile (283-287). In spite of the prescription by Tolkāppiyar we see that even in the Śaṅgam literature and post-Śaṅgam literature the prescription is not strictly followed.[17] In the early Tamil literature all upamā vācakas are used to denote all varieties of upamās. In the later Tamil literature the question does not arise at all because most of the words enumerated by Tolkāppiyar have lost their currency by that time.

As remarked earlier Tolkāppiyar is not interested in showing all the varieties of upamā. He mentions some of them by name and mentions some of them by saying 'others'. In explaining these upamās Iḷampūraṇar and Pērāśiriyar hold different views. We cannot

17. For a detailed account of the similies found in the Śaṅgam literature see M. Varadarajan, The Treatment of Nature in Śaṅgam Literature, pp. 318–355.

decide which of the commentators is correct. We shall see here the similies as explained by both of them.

Tolkāppiyar mentions about an upamā named Șuṭṭikkūrā uvamam (278) which means an upamā in which no indication is available. According to Iḷampūraṇar[18] this refers to such expressions where two parallel statements are given without expressly stating that this is upamāna. That is, if the upamā vācaka is absent, then it is Șuṭṭikkūra uvaman in the opinion of Iḷampūraṇar. Pērāśiriyar holds[19] that if the points of comparison are not indicated, it is this upamā. That is, if the sāmānya dharma is not expressly stated it is this upamā.

Another variety is named Poruḷē uvamam śeytal (280) which means that the poruḷ (subject-matter) is made upamā. Iḷampūraṇar and Pērāśiriyar differ in explaining this simile. According to Iḷampūraṇar[20] if the upamāna and upameya are not separately mentioned, it is this upamā. Iḷampūraṇar means here Rūpaka. In Pērāśiriyar's[21] opinion if the upameya is made the upamāna and the upamāna is made the upameya it is this upamā.

Another variety named by Tolkāppiyar is Vēṟupaḍavanda Uvamattōṟṟam (305) which means an upamā that is different from these. In the example cited by Iḷampūraṇar three objects are mentioned,[22] the

18. Ilam. Com. p. 400.

19. Pērā. Com. p. 68.

20. Ilam. Com. p. 401.

21. Pērā. Com. p. 69.

22. Ilam. Com. p. 414.

sun, his rays and the darkness. The sun is identified, by way of rūpaka, with the king, the rays are identified by the same method with the army of the king and darkness is not identified with anything. Thus what we find in this poem is that some are identified and some are left without identifications. Tolkāppiyar has not allowed such a simile earlier. Therefore he calls it Vērupaḍavanda uvamai. Pērāśiriyar gives a number of upamās coming under this category.[23] These upamās can be related to some of the varieties found in Daṇḍialaṁkāram and Kāvyādarśa.

Another variety indicated by Tolkāppiyar is Orīyikkūrum uvamai (306) which means that the upamāna is separated from upameya. Both Iḷampūraṇar and Pērāśiriyar agree[24] in explaining this variety. Instead of comparing an object with another, if we say how you are a match to it, it is this upamā.

Another variety named by Tolkāppiyar is Payanilai purinda vaḷakkuvamai (307) which means that a particular effect is obtained by this upamā.[25] In the Śaṅgam age there was a king named Pāri who was a great philonthrophist equivalent to Karṇa. A poet praises him in a new way. He says 'Do not think that there is only one donar here. There is rain also (which gives profusely)'. Here the simile is very nicely handled.

Tadumāṟu uvamam (308) which means the simile of delusion, is a variety mentioned by Tolkāppiyar. As

---

23. Pērā. Com. p. 98. The editor of Kalagam edition in his footnote on p. 28 (Pērāśiriyar Commentary) gives the equivalent names from the later Tamil alaṁkarāra works.

24. Ilam Com. p. 414; Pērā. Com. p, 103.

25. Ilam. Com. p. 415; Perā. Com. p, 104,

an example we may cite the verse where the glance of the lady is mentioned along with the god of death, the eye and the female deer but nothing is definitely compared with the upameya. Such an example is given by Iḷampūraṇar.[26] Pērāśiriyar[27] thinks if the upameya is made upamāna and vice versa it is this upamā.

When one object is compared to another, that object to another and so on, it is called Aḍukkiya tōṟṟa uvamai (309). This is divided by Tolkāppiyar into three namely Niraniṟuttamaittal, Niranniṟai and Suṇṇam. When a series of upamānas is compared to one upameya it is called Niraniṟuttamaittal. When an equal number of upameyas is compared to equal number of upamānas in the same order it is Niraniṟai. When an equal number of upameyas is compared to an equal number of upamānas in different order it is Suṇṇam. Only these three types of upamās are allowed by Tolkāppiyar. Other types of Aḍukkiya tōṟṟa upamās are not to be used. For example, after comparing the face to the lotus if we again compare the moon with the face, it is not allowed.[28]

So far we have been considering those varieties of upamās which are accepted by Iḷampūraṇar and Pērāśiriyar to be varieties of explicit upamā. As pointed out in the early part of this chapter there are some sūtras in Tolkāppiyam which are taken to mean the explicit upamā by Iḷampūraṇar, and the suggested upamā by Pērāśiriyar. We will follow Iḷampūraṇar

26. Ilam. Com. p. 415.

27. Pērā. Com. p. 105–6.

28. Ilam. Com. p. 416; Pērā. Com. p. 106 f. Pērāśiriyar splits the sūtra into two.

here and accept the sūtras to mean explicit upamā. When we consider the suggested upamā we will accept the authority of Pērāśiriyar and have them meaning accordingly.

When a thing is described with reference to its origin, following the rules of tradition without being compared to any other thing, the object to which it is compared can be seen with the knowledge of experience. Thus says Tolkāppiyar when he speaks about a variety of upamā named by him Piṟidoḍupaḍāta piṟappoḍu nōkkiya uvamai. This sūtra is explained by Pērāśiriyar to mean the suggested upamā.[29]

In the chapter on Upamā Tolkāppiyar refers to uvamappōli and says that it will be of five varieties (295, 296). This uvamappōli is taken to be a suggested simile by Pērāśiriyar. Iḷampūraṇar[30] takes it to mean the explicit upamā and gives the five varieties. 1. There is no upamāna for this, 2. It itself is its upamāna, 3. If all the limbs of different objects are put together then it will be the upamāna for this, 4. If all the beauties of other objects are collected together then that will be its upamāna and 5. When the upameya is compared to a disgraceful upamāna.

In the next sūtra Tolkāppiyar says that the five types of uvamappōli may be described with reference to action, effect, parts, colour and origin (296). On this Iḷampūraṇar writes[31] that if the upameya is described as having no upamāna it should be described

---

29. Pērā. Com. p. 89.

30. Ilam. Com. p. 408.

31. ibid. P, 37.

as having no upamāna either with reference to action or with reference to effect and so on. This will hold good for the other four varieties mentioned above.

We may attempt a little to consider as to who, Iḷampūraṇar or Pērāśiriyar, will be justifiable in explaining the uvamappōli. It seems that Iḷampūraṇar may be right. Tolkāppiyar refers to the suggested simile in many places in Poruḷadhikāram and seems to reserve the chapter on simile exclusively for the explicit simile. According to Pērāśiriyar, Tolkāppiyar mentions in the Ahattiṇai the Uḷḷuṟai upamā first and the explicit upamā next. But when he comes to the chapter on simile, he describes first the explicit upamā and reserves the suggested upamā to the later part of the chapter.[32] Whatever might be the reason for Tolkāppiyar to reserve the suggested simile to later part of the chapter it cannot be denied that Tolkāppiyar again takes up the explicit simile at the end of the chapter on Upamā. Even if we accept the remark of Pērāśiriyar and treat the uvamappōli as a suggested simile, we cannot understand why Tolkāppiyar should go to discuss about the explicit upamā again at the last part of the chapter. If we take the explanation of Iḷampūraṇar we can understand that Tolkāppiyar completely devotes this chapter to explicit simile. In the absence of clear evidence this kind of logical argument may or may not have any truth behind it.

In this chapter on simile Tolkāppiyar does not fail to mention the restrictions that the characters should have in mind while making use of similies. If the lady

---

32, Pērā. Com. P. 57.

love makes use of similes she should use only those upamānas that she is normally expected to know(297). If the lady-love's friend uses similies she can use only those objects which belong to the region where she normally lives (298). The hero should use the upamāna within the province of his knowledge which will be of wide range (299). The others can use the similies as suited to them(300).

Tolkāppiyar has some more interesting points in his chapter on simile. He says that the significance of the use of a particular upamāna is to be understood through the knowledge of tradition(292). The poets should be very careful in selecting the similies for the reason that their experience will be judged by the similies they use (291).

Before we conclude this chapter it is necessary to observe another important concept which Tolkāppiyar places before us. Tolkāppiyar says in sūtra (290) in this connection that greatness and smallness appear as points of comparisons in passages beaming with meyppāḍu. The real significance of this sūtra is not clear to us but the commentators help us to some extent. According to them this sūtra connects very closely the upamā and the eight meyppāḍus in order to bring out the greatness or smallness of something. The example cited by Iḷampūraṇar means this[33]: her secret part is as big as the desire (of the people) and her middle portion is as subtle as the intellect of the great. Here the greatness and the smallness of the secret part and the middle portion of the lady are

---

33. Ilam. Com. P. 408.

compared to the endless desire of the people and the fine intellect of the great. While saying this comparison the speaker has joy in him. Therefore this comparison is intimately related to one of the bhāvas or rasas namely hāsya. Pērāśiriyar quotes[34] another interesting stanza to explain this concept. His illustrative verse means this : The concubine one day accidentally meets a small boy who resembles her lover. When she is very happy at this, the legal wife of her lover who saw this from the veranda of her house suddenly remarks that you are also a mother to that boy. As soon as this remark was passed the concubine is shocked that her relationship is known to the legal wife and as a result of this shock she is like a thief who was captured red-handed. The wife enjoys the scene comparing to herself the concubine to a thief. Here also the comparison is closely associated with the bhāva hāsya. Similarly the upamā can be connected with all the eight bhāvas or rasas. Iḷampūraṇar adds a remark here. He says[35] that if there is no connection of the upamā to any of the meyppāḍus it is useless.

From this we may assume that in Tamil tradition they had a clear picture of the role and scope of the simile[36]. The simile will be enjoyable in ordinary

---

34. Pērā. Com. P. 84.

35, Ilam. Com. P. 408.

36. In Sanskrit tradiion the authorities have very often warned us that the alamkāras must be very carefully used in literature, V. Raghavan in his article on the,Use and Abuse of Alamkāra (An Introduction to Indian Poetics, pp. 94-101) considers the problems regarding the place and scope of alamkāras in literature. Ānandavardhana in his Dhvanyāloka gives the following main rules regarding this problem. (i)Alamkāras must be ancillary, (ii)they must never become main, (iii) the main theme shall always be kept in view and figures, in consequence, must be taken and thrown away in accordance with the requirement ot the main idea,(iv) they must not be too much elaborated

passages but if it is associated with the bhāvas or rasas the purpose and aim of the simile will be more apt. In Sanskrit tradition too they felt that alaṁkāras and the rasas or bhāvas have enough scope to co-operate with each other. Under usual circumstances the rasa will be the dominant element in literature. But there are occasions where the alaṁkāras occupy a prominent place pushing the rasa or bhāva to noticeable background. In such cases the suggestion becomes 'subordinated suggestion' and the alaṁkāra gets the designation of rasavadalaṁkāra.

The concept of rasavadalṁkāra[37] is an old one recognised even by the Sanskrit literary authorities of the pre-Dhvani period. Ānandavardhana also recognises this concept but the definition of rasavadalaṃkāra by the earlier authorities and Ānandavardhana is different. According to the ancients the concept of rasavadalaṃkāra occurs in two places: 1. when direct emotional behaviour is applied to sentient beings and 2. when emotional behaviour is imputed to insentient beings. But Ānandavardhana prefers to define the rasavadalaṃkāra as the one in which the main purport happens to be some other meaning and in which its beauty is enhanced by sentiment etc. Here in the Tamil illustrations we could see the definition of Ānandavardhana fitting very well. Therefore we may assume that the ancient Tamil tradition foresaw the apt definition of rasavadalaṃkāra many years before Ānandavardhana.

---

or overworked and (v) even if they are worked out a good poet must take care to give them, on a whole, the position of secondary status, see Dhvanyāloka, Second Flash, 18 and 19.

37. K. Krishnamoorthy, Essays in Sanskrit Criticism p.86ff. discusses the problem of rasavadalamkāra.

It is really remarkable that Tolkāppiyar knows precisely the dangers of introducing the alaṁkāras beyond their scope and utility. In the entire Śaṅgam poetry we never get instances for the misuse of alaṁkāras.

CHAPTER

6

The Idea of Suggestion

What is suggestion and what is the need for suggestion in literature are two very important questions to be raised and answered at the outset. To answer these questions we certainly need a long space which will not be available to us here but an elaborate reply also may not be proper in this context. Therefore a brief answer will be given here.

It is a well known fact that the success of a creative writer lies in his capacity to express effectively all his ideas and emotions in his literature. If we are to accept that the creative writer should 'express' all his thought in his composition how are we to accept that the element of suggestion has any scope in literature? This is really a pertinent question which should be answered. Let us try to answer this question. If we see a man speaking to some one we will notice that he, while speaking tries to express his ideas not only through his words but also through his facial expressions and the movement of his hands etc. Why should he do these? Is it because that it is his mannerism to do these while speaking? Mannerism may play a role here but that is not the only cause.

The main reason to seek the help of things other than one's speech is that however much one may be efficient in expressing all the thoughts through one's oral expressions, it must be accepted, no human speech can adequately carry all the ideas and emotions. The man referred to earlier tries to express through other means also but finally he feels that he has some more ideas and emotions inside waiting for proper vehicles to carry them out. This is true of all men and languages. Man has not yet succeeded in discovering a perfect language. As long as we are forced to express through these defective languages we may have to use all possible limbs of our body to obtain maximum satisfaction.

If that be the case, what can the creative writer do? While speaking we have at least the help of our limbs to come to our rescue but the writer cannot seek the help of these. All his ideas and emotions will have to be contained in the words alone. Even if he writes with facial expressions and physical features the readers will be able to get only the bare words finally. The poet however able he may be, cannot make his words carry his expressions other than what the words will usually contain. The mere words minus the facial and physical expressions become skeletal.

It is to rectify the fundamental defect of the words, humanity has found out a device. The device is to attach some more meaning to the words other than the common meaning. Apart from the etymological and traditionally accepted expressed meaning, many words of the language are given the responsibility of carrying with them these extra meanings. The extra meanings are classified in Sanskrit into two categories namely

the lakṣaṇārtha and dhvanyārtha. In ordinary day to day expression the extra meaning may or may not be used but the creative writer is in need of these extra meanings to express himself more clearly. Therefore, it may be understood that the element of suggestion which may be called extra meaning, is required more to make the writers express themselves more effectively.

For example, if a poet beautifully describes the Nature or a lady, he brings all the beautiful elements in his words and the readers get a clear picture of the beauty. But in this connection it has to be remembered that beauty etc. are more subjective than objective. What is beautiful to X may not be beautiful to Y. As soon as the word beauty is uttered, X mentally and automatically visualises his own form of beauty and then he begins to compare the described beauty with his mental beauty. It is never possible to give an identical beauty by another person. The more the poet describes the beauty, the farther it goes away from the mental conception of the readers. Therefore, it is always better to indicate and induce other's imagination rather than describe plainly.

All the standard creative writers of the world especially the ancient writers knew this psychology of readers. We may not say that they knew this consciously but they somehow felt it. Therefore all the great poets of the world try to be more expressive and efficient by 'suggesting.' The more it is suggested the more it becomes expressed. This is the peculiarity of suggestion. If the poet wants to be more successful he unconsciously employs the element of suggestion in his writings.

In this connection it is necessary to state briefly here the history of suggestion in Sanskrit tradition. The ancient Sanskrit literature is full of suggestive elements from the beginning and these ideas were unknowingly appreciated and enjoyed by the readers of the past. The earlier critics of Sanskrit literature were unable to locate where exactly the real beauty of literature lay. The great authorities like Daṇḍin, Bāmaha, Vāmana Rudraṭa[1] and others were approaching the problem to some extent but they missed the real point. The principle of real beauty of poetry had to wait till about the middle of the ninth century A. D.[2] to see the light of the day. It was Ānandavardhana who hailed from Kashmir discovered the principle for the first time in the history of Sanskrit literature and spoke about it elaborately in the work called Dhvanyāloka which he wrote mainly for the purpose of explaining and establishing the principle.[3] His work and theory created a stir throughout the literary world in Sanskrit. Many great scholars read his work with abiding interest and many appreciated and accepted it and some rejected and rediculed it.[4]

Then came Abhinavagupta[5] who was also a Kashmiri and who was a very great critic and

---

1. For an account of the literary theories of these authorities see P. V. Kane, op. cit. See also S. K. De, op. cit.

2. For a brief discussion on the date of Ānandavardhana see P. V. Kane, op. cit. p. 202.

3. For a detailed exposition of the doctrine of Dhvani see the works cited above. See also K. Krishnamoorthy's translation of Dhvanyāloka and his book Dhvanyāloka and its Critics.

4. For details vide K. Krishnamoorthy, Dhvanyāloka and its Critics, Chapter VI.

5. For a complete study of Abhinavagupta see K. C. Pandey, Abhinavagupta.

philosopher. He wrote a commentary on Dhvanyāloka which almost placed the theory of suggestion on very firm footing. There were some critics after the time of Abhinavagupta who hesitated to accept the idea of suggestion but by that time the doctrine became established among the readers and critics. There were some after the time of Abhinavagupta who tried to improve the theory of suggestion or adopted it to suit their convenience.

The main opponents of the anti-suggestion school may be divided into these categories: those who rejected it saying that there is no principle called dhvani in literature; those who tried to include it in the already known principles of literature and those who attempted to include it in the secondary meaning of the word called lakṣaṇā. Ānandavardhana himself was aware of these schools or he anticipated these objections[6]. He tries to show in his work that his principle of suggestion is a new discovery as far as the theory aspect of it was concerned and a very old element in literature as far as its existence was concerned.

Ānandavardhana's real intention in discovering the idea of suggestion may be guessed by us. Long before his time Bharata has spoken of the theory of rasa even though he did not state explicitly that it was the chief element in literature. Moreover, he spoke of rasa, only in relation to drama or dance and therefore the later Sanskrit critics never cared for it as far as poetry and other literary forms were concerned.[7]

---

6. Dhvanyāloka Kārikā 1 and the exposition thereon.

7. Daṇḍin and others seem to know the concept of rasa but they have not given any importance to it.

Ānandavardhana thought that the rasa was equally important to poetry and other forms of literature also. But he was not willing to accept the rasa principle as it was, as he thought that it would not be very suitable to other forms of literature in its original nature.

Ānandavardhana conceived therefore a bigger principle to relate the rasa to all forms of literature. Especially he was more worried about the small pieces of isolated poems. The small poetry will not be able to develop rasa fully but at the same time it will contain an equally important element. That important element in small poem and the comprehensive important element in all literature was named by him dhvani or suggestion.

These remarks are necessary to single out the greatness of Tolkāppiyar. We have already indicated that the date of Tolkāppiyar may be held to be the 4th or the 3rd century B. C. Therefore Tolkāppiyar lived nearly 1200 years before Ānandavardhana. In Sanskrit, even the great critics like Daṇḍin, Bhāmaha and others missed the principle of suggestion even though they accepted an extra function to the words as contained in some alaṁkāras like samāsokti. In spite of their accepting an extra function to literary words and in spite of Bharata's theory of rasa, it is really inexplicable how these great critics could miss the principle of suggestion. While they missed it even in the middle centuries of the Christian era, Tolkāppiyar recognised it even in the early centuries before Christ. It is really a remarkable discovery in the ancient period. The credit of according due recognition to the idea of suggestion in literature goes first to Tolkāppiyar. If Ānandavardhana had known about Tolkāppiyar he

would have been very much benefited by some of the ideas of Tolkāppiyar.

Before going to consider the idea of suggestion as contained in Tolkāppiyam it is necessary to make some more observations here. Tolkāppiyar, even though he speaks of the idea of suggestion, never seems to form any theory out of it. Not only here, with regard to other important principles of poetry and grammar also, Tolkāppiyar does not seem to formulate any theories. It is really disappointing to see such an attitude in such a great personality but perhaps it was the peculiarity of his time! Throughout in Tolkāppiyam he exhibits rather crude presentation as we have already indicated. Tolkāppiyar's idea of suggestion is more like a newly discovered diamond fresh from the earth. It contains all its shining and brightness but in a hidden way. The greatest contribution of Tolkāppiyar to Indian literary world seems to be his recognition of the idea of suggestion at a very early period.

Like Ānandavardhana, Tolkāppiyar never speaks plainly of the importance of the idea of suggestion. Nor does he seem to discuss the relationship of the idea of suggestion to the main trend of literature. We cannot find fault with him because it has been his nature throughout his work. He never tries to connect the theme with the main stream of literature and he does not attempt to show the relationship of his characters to the main framework of literature. He states many important literary facts and perhaps anticipates that the modern students of literature will worry themselves about such problems!

In view of the foregoing facts we may understand that Tolkāppiyar cannot be compared with Ānandavardhana. Ānandavardhana intends to propagate the importance of suggestion to the critics but Tolkāppiyar does not have any such intention. Ānandavardhana views the entire literature from the point of view of suggestion whereas Tolkāppiyar treats his suggestion as one of the elements of literature.

Will the above remark mean that Tolkāppiyar speaks about suggestion without understanding the importance of or attaching any significance to the principle of suggestion? According to Tolkāppiyar, suggestion is a principle for the exclusive use in Ahattiṇai which covers the love theme and the theme of married life.[8] We have already pointed out that in Ahattiṇai the entire transactions will be expressed only through the 'speech' made by the characters that are allowed to speak therein. It has also been indicated that Tolkāppiyar has defined clearly the circumstances in which the characters should speak. Tolkāppiyar has also allowed the characters to use suggestion and has formulated rules as to how each character should make use of suggestion. We may have to consider as to why Tolkāppiyar should be so careful about suggestion. If he had thought that suggestion was an unimportant principle or if he had not understood the significance of suggestion he would not have made such restrictions regarding suggestion.

8. This is one of the important places of contrast between the Sanskrit and the Tamil concepts of suggestion. Ānandavardhana does not seem to restrict the scope of dhvani to love themes alone.

Another point to be remembered in this connection is this: according to Tolkāppiyar suggestion or simile helps us to fix the tiṇai to which the particular stanza belongs. We have already shown that the land is divided in Tamil literature into five regions namely mullai, kuṟiñji etc. and with each region a particular species of animal, bird etc. is associated. These objects, as we know previously, are known as karup poruḷ. Therefore by the mention of a particular animal, bird, flower etc. the exact tiṇai or the region indicated in the stanza will be understood. Also we have remarked earlier that with each tiṇai a particular mood or mental state is related. It need not be mentioned again here that the mood or the mental state is the most important element in literature and actually the poet has aimed to stress on this mood in his writing. There can be no important element in literature than the one which the poet has at the bottom of his heart.[9] If Tolkāppiyar has chosen suggestion (and simile) as the prime indicator of tiṇai we may understand how much significance he attaches to these principles.[10] Hence we need not doubt any more the significant place assigned by Tolkāppiyar to suggestion (and simile).

We may now turn to consider the details of suggestion as found in Tolkāppiyam. We may have to remark

---

9. It is always a difficult point to decide the importance of meanings that a particular poem may convey. Suppose there are two meanings in a piece of poetry, how are we to decide which meaning is more important? We cannot give normally any blunt rule to help us in this regard. But there can be no doubt regarding the importance of a meaning if the poet or the character has his intention on it.

10. The fact that Tolkāppiyar intends to give all importance to the concept of tiṇai which means 'state of mind' may be clear by the fact that he divides the literature only on the basis of tiṇai such as kaikkilai, mullai etc.

in this connection that such an important principle could not be understood in its true light in which Tolkāppiyar presents it. The reason is that the Tolkāppiyam tradition has gone to the background after two or three centuries after Christ. The earliest commentator, Iḷampūraṇar, came only in the 11th century A.D. He could not have understood the real mind of Tolkāppiyar in conceiving the idea of suggestion. He could only believe what his teacher or the oral tradition preserved for him. Our difficulties increase when we compare the commentary of Iḷampūraṇar with that of Naccin̲ārkkin̲iyar. Both of them explain the principle in their own way perhaps as it was handed down to them. We are unable to decide whose explanation is nearer to Tolkāppiyar. We are compelled to choose either the interpretation of Iḷampūraṇar or Naccin̲ārkkin̲iyar. It does not appear to be justified to accept either Iḷampūraṇar or Naccin̲ārkkin̲ar. At the same time we cannot logically accept both of them. We have tried to approach the problem very cautiously and carefully and we have attempted to justify our position as far as we could. In some cases we have tried to present both the views to the readers leaving the choice to them. It should also be made clear here that Iḷampūraṇar and Naccin̲ārkkin̲iyar have failed to offer some critical remarks which are absolutely necessary in connection with this problem.

Tolkāppiyar speaks about the idea of suggestion in three places in Poruḷadhikāram. If we are to accept that uvamappōli also is a variety of suggestion as held by Pērāśiriyar and Naccin̲ārkkin̲iyar we may say that Tolkāppiyar speaks about the principle of suggestion in four places in Poruḷadhikāram. Why should Tolkāppiyar speak about it in three or four places?

The commentators of Tolkāppiyam have no reply to this question as they have not thought of this problem. The idea of suggestion is termed by Tolkāppiyar uḷḷuṟai. He mentions about the principle first in the Ahattiṇai. After his reference to the five tiṇais which deal with the reciprocal love he mentions about this uḷḷuṟai perhaps he thinks that the idea of suggestion is meant only for the five tiṇais. In this place he calls it uḷḷuṟai and in the fourth sūtra he mentions about the explicit simile.

The second reference to suggestion occurs in two places in the chapter called Poruḷ Iyal. In the first reference in this chapter Tolkāppiyar calls it Iṟaicchi which cannot be translated into English but may be explained as a variety of suggestion. In the second reference to suggestion in the same chapter, Tolkāppiyar divides suggestion into five categories. The third place in which the idea of suggestion is referred to by Tolkāppiyar occurs in the chapter on upamā in which he deals with the explicit simile and its varieties. Tolkāppiyar's mention of suggestion in the chapter on upamā can be understood but why should he suddenly mention about iṟaicchi in the Poruḷ Iyal cannot be answered satisfactorily.

Another problem regarding suggestion is this. It is all right that Tolkāppiyar divides suggestion into five classes but it is not known whether this fivefold division includes the suggested simile and iṟaicchi which he has already mentioned. Tolkāppiyar's views on this question is not to be known by us. Iḷampūraṇar seems to think that the fivefold division mentioned here includes the already mentioned suggested simile but he does not seem to accept that iṟaicchi is included

here. His explanation of iṟaicchi is different. On the other hand Naccinārkkiṉiyar says that the fivefold division includes the suggested simile and iṟaicchi. We have no means to determine the issue. We will have to accept both the commentators and give their opinion here.

Another problem requiring our attention is the problem of uvamappōli. It has already been mentioned that according to Pērāśiriyar this variety of simile is a variety of suggestion whereas Iḷampūraṇar takes it to be a variety of explicit simile. Naccinārkkiṉiyar seems to endorse the view of Pērāśiriyar. In fact the commentary of Naccinārkkiṉiyar on simile has not yet been discovered but from his remarks in the other chapters which are available to us we may conclude it so.[11] We are again at a loss to decide either in favour of Iḷampūraṇar or in favour of the other commentators. For the purpose of this chapter we will hold Pērāśiriyar to be correct and treat the uvamappōli as a variety of suggestion. It is unfortunate that Pērāśiriyar should be silent on the question why Tolkāppiyar named it uvamappōli while he has already spoken of this principle in different names. Pērāśiriyar is bound to answer whether Tolkāppiyar includes this uvamappōli in his fivefold division of suggestion. Unfortunately we could not discover the commentary of Pērāśiriyar on Poruḷ Iyal in which Tolkāppiyar mentions about the five divisions of suggestion. Similarly Naccinārkkiṉiyar is expected to answer why Tolkāppiyar should mention the variety of suggestion as iṟaicchi in one place in Poruḷ Iyal and name it uḍaṉuṟai in another place in the

11. For example see Nac. Com. p. 112.

same chapter. These are very vital problems for which neither the commentators have any answer nor can we assume any answer. There are some more problems relating to the idea of suggestion and we will mention about them at suitable contexts.

Tolkāppiyar first mentions about the utility of the suggested simile in literature. He says that it helps us to know the tiṇai to which the particular poem belongs. We have already explained that this is an important help rendered by the suggested simile After mentioning about the utility of the suggested simile Tolkāppiyar defines the scope of the suggested simile. He tells us that it is based on any karup poruḷ i. e. objects found in the five regions, except the gods. It is therefore clear that the gods cannot be related to any suggested simile. The reason for excluding the gods from the sphere of suggested simile is not explained either by Tolkāppiyar or by the commentators.

Tolkāppiyar defines suggested simile as follows : It is suggested simile if (the poet) expresses anything, thinking that what he has in his mind is related to what he expresses. One may understand that it is a broad and vague definition but the idea is not complicated. The poet has something in his mind and he does not want to state it plainly for some reason. He chooses to express it in a different way. He tells something and knows that what he expressed will be understood not in its expressed words but in his intended idea. Naccinārkkiniyar[12] offers some more points. He says that the suggested simile should have some words which would help the reader or the person to whom it

12. Nac. Com. p. 114.

is intended, to understand the real intention of the speaker.

We will see an example given for this suggestion. Iḷampūraṇar[13] and Naccinārkkiniyar[14] give two different examples for this suggestion. Though the examples are different there seems to be not much difference in the explanation of the definition of this suggestion. Therefore, we will consider the example given by Iḷampūraṇar : The poet is speaking of a bee. He says that the bee has come away from the lotus and goes to taste the honey of a less-ranking flower which has less honey and which has been tasted by many. The intended idea of the poet is that the hero has come away from the lotus-like heroine and goes to enjoy a public woman who does not have enough charm and who has been enjoyed by many.

We will now take up iṟaicchi, another variety of suggestion. There is difficulty in understanding this variety of suggestion. The major part of the difficulty is caused by the different readings which Iḷampūraṇar and Naccinārkkiniyar adopt in the sūtra in which Tolkāppiyar speaks about iṟaicchi. The second trouble is that Tolkāppiyar has not chosen to define iṟaicchi as he did in the case of uḷḷuṟai uvamam. Iḷampūraṇar adopts the reading 'iṟaicchitānē urip puṟattaduvē'. Naccinārkkiniyar takes the reading 'iṟaicchitānē porut puṟattaduvē'. Iḷampūraṇar's reading means iṟaicchi is that which is outside the urip poruḷ. Naccinārkkiniyar's reading means iṟaicchi is that which is

13. Ilam. Com. p. 63.

14. Nac. Com. p. 114.

outside the expressed meaning. We cannot decide whose reading is correct. Even if we accept that Tolkāppiyar wrote one of the readings, the definition, rather the idea expressed by the sūtra, is very ambiguous. The commentators still make it vague by differing in their reading. Whether Iḷampūraṇar's reading is correct or not, his explanation of iṟaicchi seems to be not worth the concept. He says[15] iṟaicchi is that which becomes an epithet to the object (like land, village etc.). He gives an example which is a speech by the heroine. She says that the friendship with the hero, who hails from the hilly region in which there is the flower kuṟiñji from which honey is made, cannot be compared with the wide land, high sky and the deep sea. According to Iḷampūraṇar the kuṟiñji flower and the honey referred to here is the iṟaicchi idea. He seems to have missed the point.

The explanation of Naccinārkkiṉiyar may be considered now. He says that[16] there is an extra meaning in iṟaicchi which is not only extra to the expressed meaning but the extra meaning serves a useful purpose also. He gives an example. There is a mountain which belongs to the native place of the hero who failed to keep his promise and in which there is waterfall which still has water. Here the speaker wishes to say that the hero has failed to keep his promise. Instead of saying that, the speaker says "what wonder that the waterfall still has water." If he had really failed to keep his promise the waterfall should have become dry due to the faulty person living

15. Ilam. Com. p. 346.

16. Nac. Com. p. 317.

in that area. The fact that the waterfall has not become dry means that he has not failed in his promise. The iṟaicchi idea is that he has not failed to keep his word. This is suggested in the stanza that the waterfall still has water.

Tolkāppiyar has some more things to say about iṟaicchi. He says that there are meanings suggested by iṟaicchi and they are understood only by the learned at the proper context. The example given by Iḷampūraṇar is this.[17] The heroine says to her friend, 'I am always in one mind with the hero. He belongs to the place where there is a vēngai tree which has been felled by two fighting elephants and consequently it has become easy for the ladies of the hilly region to collect its flowers standing on the floor itself to wear them on their head.' The idea is that the proposal sent by the hero to marry her has been accepted by some of her relatives and rejected by some. As a result of this fight he comes and meets her very often while on previous occasions he used to meet her very rarely. That is, the vēngai tree from which flowers could not be collected previously by the girls without climbing on it, has now become within their easy reach. Similarly the hero who was very irregular in meeting her has become so easy for her to be met very often.

The example given by Naccinārkkiniyar is as follows :[18] It is addressed to the hero by the lady-love's friend. 'O hero who belongs to the region in which the elephant is eating away the grain kept collected on the

---

17. Ilam. Com. p. 346.

18. Nac. Com. p. 317.

front portion of the house while it is allowing its young one to suck its udder, do not trouble the heroine'. Here the elephant is doing its duty but at the same time it is causing destruction to the grain. Similarly the hero is dutiful to others but is causing the gradual destruction of the heroine by not marrying her soon.

Now we may have to face a very meaningful question. The suggested simile of which we mentioned earlier and the iṟaicchi referred to here appear to be the same. Both have an inner meaning but it is expressed by someway. Both have an explicit idea in the form of describing the life of an animal or insect.[19] What then is the difference between the two, or is there any difference at all to justify their being classified into two types of suggestions. Both Tolkāppiyar and Iḷampūraṇar do not seem to doubt the possibility of this question. Naccinārkkiṉiyar recognises the difficulty and answers it too.[20] In so far as the suggested simile and the iṟaicchi contain an implied meaning which is expressed by citing the life of an animal or insect they are the same. But the difference lies in the fact that the suggested simile is merely a statement of an objective truth whereas iṟaicchi not merely suggests a fact but expects to convey a subjective wish apart from the objective statement of fact.

Let us be more clear. In the example given under suggested simile the behaviour of a lover who goes to a public girl leaving his high-ranking heroine is expressed

---

19. In Sanskrit the description of the life of animals and birds to express the human emotion has to some extent been found in literature. But the ancient Tamils seem to have had a special achievement in this technique.

20. Nac. Com. p. 317-8.

by the conduct of the bee. Apart from this factual idea, the speaker does not have any message to the hero. But in the iṟaicchi example the speaker is not merely interested in just expressing the factual idea but also wishes to imply a decision or a message. In the example given by Iḷampūraṇar the heroine says that her lover has become easy for her to meet. He is like the fallen vēngai tree.[21] But she says this to her friend to suggest further that she is going to elope with the hero as a result of the fight between her relatives. The idea that she is going to elope with him is peculiar only to iṟaicchi. Similarly in the example found in Naccinārk-kiṉiyar the hero is compared to the elephant not merely to compare but to remind him of his most important duty that he should try to marry her soon, otherwise he will be destroying her as the elephant destroyed the grain. Thus it may be understood that the suggested simile and iṟaicchi are common to some extent but differ in being an objective statement and making a subjective appeal. If the suggestion has any message or any further information from the speaker it is iṟaicchi. If it is a mere suggestion of facts it is suggested simile.

Iṟaicchi seems to have another difference. Tolkāppiyar says that the iṟaicchi serves a purpose by bringing out a comfortable idea at the time of distress.

---

21. Naccinārkkiṉiyar gives a more enjoyable annotation to this stanza. 'An angry elephant attacks a vēnkai tree and destroys its branches. The branches are not broken but only bent to the ground. The branches continue to blossom and the girls find it easy to pluck the flowers standing on the ground. This suggests that the hero has caused the heroine untold sufferings but has been merciful enough to make her still live without perishing and undergo some more sufferings by others.' Pērāśiriyar also seems to adopt the same meaning to this verse. We have followed this meaning under uvamappōli based on parts.

Iḷampūraṇar and Naccinārkkiniyar do not differ in this place.[22] The hero has gone on business to some other place and the lady-love is unable to bear the separation. But the heroine or her friend hopes that he will return soon. How do they guess this? The path of the hero is a desert which is very dry and difficult to cross. On his way he will have many occasions to witness the affectionate life of the animals etc. For example, the she-elephant which will be accompanying her he-elephant will feel very thirsty. The he-elephant will try to give her water by removing the skin of a juicy tree. The hero who will witness many such cases will grow a strong feeling to return home soon. In such places the use of iṟaicchi is allowed by Tolkāppiyar. But the suggested simile is useful to determine the tiṇai and suggest a fact. Apart from this it has no practical utility or message either to the characters or to us.

After speaking about the suggested simile and the iṟaicchi Tolkāppiyar mentions about the fivefold divisions of suggestion. They are: uḍanuṟai, uvamam, śuṭṭu, nahai and śiṟappu. Tolkāppiyar does not give any definition of these varieties of suggestion. In the absence of any explanations by Tolkāppiyar it is really difficult to understand what he means exactly by these. The commentators as usual differ in explaining the varieties. Fortunately both of them agree that the uvamam referred to here in the fivefold divison is identical with the suggested simile of which we know earlier

---

22. Ilampūraṇar gives a different illustration but that also brings to light the affection of the he-elephant towards the she-elephant. (p. 347); Nac. Com. p. 318.

Uḍanuṟai, according to Iḷampūraṇar,[23] is this : When a particular idea is expressed, another idea which is closely related to that will be understood along with that. We may notice that Iḷampūraṇar's explanation is no explanation at all. He does not see the obligation to add a remark whether this uḍanuṟai is in anyway connected with iṟaicchi or it is a new division made by Tolkāppiyar. He gives an illustration[24] and we shall see whether this illustration helps us to know any further information regarding the concept. In a garden there is a punnai tree which was nourished by the foster-mother of the heroine, and a hero and a heroine used to meet under it regularly. The hero is postponing the marriage unduly and the heroine wishes to tell him that he should marry her soon. She cannot express it plainly. So she says that she feels shy to be in the company of the lover in the presence of the punnai tree which because of its having been nourished by her mother is like her sister. She says that she is shy before the tree and the mother may come to that place at anytime. Here the words of the heroine has a message to the hero that he should arrange to marry her very soon. We may remember that we have already indicated that if the suggestion has any message etc. to the hearer it is iṟaicchi. So there seems to be no difference between uḍanuṟai and iṟaicchi. But Iḷampūraṇar neither says it is iṟaicchi nor does he say that it is different from iṟaicchi.

But Naccinārkkiṉiyar clearly identifies uḍanuṟai with iṟaicchi.[25] We may have to thank Naccinārk-

---

23. Ilam. Com. p. 352.
24. Ilam. Com. p. 352-3.
25. Nac. Com. p. 332.

kiṉiyar for being clear in this place but there arises one difficulty here. It is a thought provoking question why Tolkāppiyar should name it iṟaicchi in one place and call it uḍanuṟai in another place. If he had considered that both were identical varieties of suggestion will he not name it iṟaicchi or uḍanuṟai in both the contexts? Nacciṉārkkiṉiyar has no answer nor is it possible for us to seek an answer elsewhere. Till we get a more satisfactory answer we will assume that uḍanuṟai and iṟaicchi are identical.

The third variety of suggestion is śuṭṭu. Both Iḷampūraṇar and Nacciṉārkkiṉiyar[26] seem to agree that it is called śuṭṭu because the intention of the speaker is made clear by his or her reference to one or more objects in a pointed way. We will consider the illustration: The poet or the speaker says "She looked at her bracelets, her tender shoulders and her feet. This was what she did there". From the particular reference to these limbs or objects what she means is that if she works hard her bracelet will fall down; her tender shoulder will be strained and her feet will suffer. She does not say all these plainly but merely indicates these by looking at them meaningfully. Because of this pointed reference to objects this is considered to be śuṭṭu which means 'pointed reference'.

The next variety is named nahai. Both the commentators agree in explaining this but they give different examples. Nacciṉārkkiṉiyar gives the example which was given by Iḷampūraṇar under uḍanuṟai, to serve as an illustration to the suggestion nahai.

---

26. Ilam. Com. p. 353; Nac. Com. p. 333.

Iḷampūraṇar gives a different illustration. We will cite what Iḷampūraṇar gives.[27] The speaker says 'When I look at her she smiles at me as if she is fond of me. There is beauty in her smile'. Here the speaker attaches some more value to her smile and so it is an example for nahai. It is not clear whether Tolkāppiyar means that all the bhāvas indicated like this can be taken to come under the suggestion nahai. If that be the case the word nahai is an upalakṣaṇa for all the bhāvas and this suggestion will mean bhāva-dhvani.

The last variety is śiṟappu. In explaining this concept both the commentators differ. Iḷampūraṇar[28] does not care to explain this clearly nor does he care to illustrate this. Naccinārkkiniyar says this:[29] If the explicit upamā keeps itself in the background and gives prominence to the suggested simile, it is śiṟappu.

We will now deal with the other variety of suggestion, called uvamappōli. We have already mentioned that this variety is considered to be referring to suggestion, only by Pērāśiriyar and Iḷampūraṇar holds it to be a variety of explicit simile. As we have no other evidence to determine the truth we will have to accept both of them to be correct even though logically it is a mistake. The explanations given by Pērāśiriyar may be considered now.

Tolkāppiyar says that uvamappōli is of five kinds based on action, effect, parts, colour or quality and

---

27. Ilam. Com. p. 353.

28. Ibid.

29. Nac. Com. p. 111.

origin or birth. As usual Tolkāppiyar does not illustrate or explain them further. Pērāśiriyar[30] gives examples to all the varieties and from these only we may have to know the nature of the varieties of uvamappōli.

The heroine speaks to the hero who has returned from the union of the concubines. He wants to embrace the heroine who has given birth to a son recently. The heroine says 'O hero who belongs to a place where lotuses grow naturally in the field which is meant for growing sugar-cane, do not embrace me who am smelling from the odour caused by recent childbirth which will spoil your chest which is beautiful on account of sandal paste (which you wore in the house of the concubine)'. The heroine suggests to the hero that it is her right to enjoy the hero but the lotus-like concubines are misusing it. She is unable to satisfy him physically because she gave birth to the son to follow the usual duty of a faithful wife.

Here the action of the lotuses in feeding the bees is compared by way of suggestion to the action of the concubines in becoming the objects of enjoyment for the hero. So this is an instance of uvamappōli based on action.

'O hero who belongs to the place where the vēla flowers appear in sugar-cane, I am prepared to bear your misbehaviour but my tender shoulders have become emaciated without having the capacity to bear it.' The heroine who says this suggests to the hero

---

30. Pērā. Com. p. 89f.

that he belongs to the place where the low type vēla flowers are blossoming forth from the sugar-cane and therefore it is natural that he cannot differentiate between a low born lady and a high-class woman. Here the effect of his attitude i. e. the emaciation of her limbs is expressed, so it is uvamappōli based on effect.

For the uvamappōli based on parts Pēriāśriyar gives the example which we considered under iṟaicchi. Here the heroine compares herself to the vēngai tree which has borne flower at death-bed. Similarly the heroine also is mentally very much troubled due to her relatives who are fighting on the issue of giving her in marriage to the hero and at that time she has decided to start a new life by eloping with the hero. Here her position is exactly like the tree. So it is an example of uvamappōli based on parts.

For the uvamappōli based on colour or quality Pērāśiriyar gives an example in which the chilliness of the naturally cool pond water is attributed to the lady's bathing in it. So this is a suggestion based on quality.

In the illustration given by Pērāśiriyar for uvamappōli based on origin or birth, the heroine compares the hero suggestively to an otter which is in the habit of eating low-born fishes. Here the heroine indicates her high birth and the low birth of the concubines. Therefore this is an illustration of uvamappōli based on birth or origin.

The foregoing exposition on the concept of suggestion in ancient Tamil tradition will stand witness to the independent thinking of the ancient Tamils on this important concept. The varieties of suggestion as

explained by Ānandavardhana[31] very much differ from the approach of the ancient Tamils. Some of the varieties held by the ancient Tamils may have somewhat close resemblance to the varieties explained by Ānandavardhana. For example, Professor P. S. Subrahmanya Sastri[32] says that uḍanuṟai may correspond to vastu dhvani, uvamam to upamā dhvani, Śuṭṭu to arthāntaranyāsa dhvani and nahai to bhāva dhvani. But he skips over śiṟappu without comparing it to any dhvani. Based on the explanation of Naccinārkkiniyar[33] we may say that śiṟappu may correspond to alaṁkāra dhvani in general.

It is really unfortunate that Tolkāppiyar does not define all the varieties of suggestion he mentions. If he had defined all of them we will be able to make a thorough study of them as to where they differ. In this connection a remark made by Pērāśiriyar is noteworthy. He says, quoting an example,[34] that in that illustration two suggestions based on action and quality occur together. This shows that in ancient Tamil tradition many more varieties of suggestion were distinguished. In fact if one makes a study of the Śaṅgam literature to find out the various varieties of suggestion, one may discover many more valuable materials.

---

31. For details of the varieties of Dhvani see K. Krishnamoorthy, Dhvanyāloka and its Critics, Chapter IV Section IV.

32. Tolkāppiyam translation, p. 132.

33. Nac. Com. p. 111.

34. Pērā. Com. p. 92. In this illustration Pērāśiriyar shows the existence of two suggestions one based on the action and the other based on the colour or quality. Tolkāppiyar says that the uvamap-pōli is of five kinds based on action etc. But a sixth variety is indicated by Pērāśiriyar here in which both the action and the colour are being compared in the same illustration.

It is really a proud fact that Tolkāppiyar accorded recognition to suggestion nearly 1200 years before Ānandavardhana. It is not known clearly whether the principle of suggestion was recognised even before the time of Tolkāppiyar or Tolkāppiyar was the first authority to recognise it as Ānandavardhana did in Sanskrit. Whatever might be the fact Tolkāppiyar and the early Tamils have contributed a remarkable principle to the literary world.

CHAPTER

7

The Doctrine of Propriety

In the earlier chapters we have noted Tolkāppiyar's concern to prescribe many rules and regulations with regard to the theme, characters, physical expressions etc. We have already remarked that Tolkāppiyar is concerned about these not with the intention of imposing restrictions on the creative writers. What then would be his real intention? Even though the theme, characters etc. have many independent roles to their credit, we must remember that all these cannot stand independent of each other in any literature. All these are parts and the literature is the whole. If the parts are not properly set the whole may lose its charm and completeness. So there must be some principles to guide the creative writers as to how the whole may not suffer on account of improper combination of the parts. The principle that deals with this aspect is called propriety. In Sanskrit it is known as aucitya. Before considering the views of Tolkāppiyar on propriety it will be useful to know briefly the ideas prevalent in Sanskrit tradition regarding this principle.[1]

---

1. For an exhaustive study of the concept of aucitya in Sanskrit literature see V.Raghavan's article on this subject in the Introduction to Indian Poetics, pp. 102-116 ; See also G. Vijayavardhana, op. cit. pp. 136-149.

The earliest literary authority who wrote on propriety was Bharata.[2] He very often reminds us that extreme care should be taken in representing appropriate characteristics of the people, their dress, correct speaking, musical notes and tunes, and others. This shows that Bharata is cautioning us having the principle of propriety in mind. Bhāmaha and Daṇḍin speak of this principle as suited to their idea of poetry. They say that care should be taken to employ proper style, alaṁkāras, etc. They have special sections on the defects of poetry and warn the poets to avoid them fully. King Yaśovarman of Kanauj enumerates a number of good features which a literature should possess. Lollaṭa, one of the famous commentators on Bharata, speaks about the principle of aucitya. Rudraṭa has understood the need for aucitya in poetry. He warns us to take care of the dress, habits, etc. to suit the culture, position, etc. of the characters.

Ānandavardhana[3] was the first authority to use the word aucitya in a prominent way and to draw the attention of the literary world to all the aspects of this principle. Although Ānandavardhana was more concerned with the principle of dhvani he could not avoid giving importance to the doctrine of propriety. He says that at every stage in the composition of literature proper care should be taken to see that the rules of propriety are not violated. He says that even the words, letters and accents should be carefully

---

2, I am indebted to the above quoted works for writing this brief note on this subject.

3. For a very useful discussion on the role of propriety in literature see Dhvanyāloka, III, vritti under 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 & 14.

selected in order to preserve propriety. In constructing the theme, in arranging the major story along with the subplot, in representing the characters and in combining the various rasas, rules of propriety are to be strictly observed. According to him, more than the presence of propriety the presence of impropriety is to be avoided. One may be skilled in delineating the ıasa well but the presence of impropriety will spoil the whole case.[4]

Rājaśekhara and his wife Avantisundarī stress the need for this aucitya principle. According to them the poets' experience, culture, training and others will be judged only according to the capacity of the writer in discriminating the proper and the improper in literature. Abhinavagupta does not fail to add his remarks on this subject. He doubly stresses the need for this principle in literature. He says that a poetry which does not have propriety cannot be called poetry; it is semblance of poetry. Some of the interesting remarks of Abhinavagupta on the principle of aucitya will concern us in the next chapter. It is enough if we note here that Abhinavagupta gives much importance to the doctrine of propriety.

Kuntaka[5] who advocated the view that vakrokti is the soul of poetry could not be brushing aside the doctrine of propriety. According to him, aucitya is a very important principle in poetry. He does not take the word aucitya to mean simply propriety but 'it is

---

4. Ānandavardhana sums up all his discussions on propriety by saying 'There is no other cause for a break in sentiment except impropriety. The greatest secret about sentiment is confirmity to well-known considerations of propriety' (III, 14)

5. See S. K. De's introduction to Vakroktijīvita of Kuntaka.

that striking mode of expression by which effectiveness or distinction of the idea on hand is manifestly promoted and achieved. It is that which clothes the idea in an altogether fresh form of excelling charm. It is also proper expression'. The next writer who wrote on aucitya was Mahima bhaṭṭa. Even though he was a pungent critic of the theory of dhvani he accepted rasa and consequently aucitya. He also stresses the need for aucitya without which, he thinks, rasa cannot be properly developed. He wants the writers to avoid the improprieties namely giving unimportance to the important idea, improperly arranging the ideas, repetition and saying irrelevantly.

Kṣemendra wrote a separate work called aucityavicāra carcā. It was he who considered this principle as the most significant doctrine in literature. He says, propriety should be employed with reference to thought, place, time, characters etc. In fact, according to him, aucitya should go with all the aspects of literature.

From the above reference to aucitya we may understand that almost all the great critics of Sanskrit literature are uniformly of the opinion that aucitya is a very significant doctrine in literature. It is also true that this principle is really an indispensable one. Such an important theory could not have escaped the purview of a standard critic like Tolkāppiyar. It is not necessary that one should use the word aucitya or its equivalent word in the regional language to speak about the concept of aucitya. Tolkāppiyar does not use the word in his work. Nor does he have any section to deal with the theory of aucitya. But he is equally concerned with the importance of this doctrine in literature.

Tolkāppiyar seems to hold the view that literature should faithfully represent the normal life.[6] It is true that literature has many deviations from the normal life but those deviations are to be maintained only in accordance with the literary tradition. Literature should not go against the accepted principles of truth normally found associated with life. For example, study and ambassadorship were mostly related in those times to the higher section of the society. Therefore in literature too this should be maintained. If a character belonging to the lower section of the society is described as leaving his wife for the purpose of study and ambassadorship it is against life and what is against life is improper. Similarly the act of war is reserved for the ruling class alone and therefore only a king can be described as going against his enemy in person or accompanied by others. The high class people alone can be described as leaving their wives in order to earn wealth.

It has not been settled clearly by scholars to what extent the divisions of society into higher and lower sections were in existence in ancient Tamilnadu.[7] We very often hear about the brahmins even in Tolkāppiyam. But it is not known whether other classes were there in those times. Tolkāppiyar prescribes that the hero should be of a higher birth but it is not clear whether he prescribes only the high caste people to be the

---

6. As Bharata *(6, 24)* Tolkāppiyar also says *(55)* that literature is in consonance with the tradition followed in literature and the world. From the prescription of the theme by Tolkāppiyar it may be seen that he wants the literature to be more faithful to life. In chapter IV of his work Bhāmaha also speaks about 'going against facts of the world'.

7. For a detailed account of the Ṣaṅgam society see N. Subrahmanian Ṣaṅgam Polity, pp. 247-323.

lovers in his literature. It is unlikely that he has any caste restrictions in his literature. But there must have existed some distinctions which he wants to be followed in literature. Anyway, he is concerned about propriety in this regard. The creative writers may have a lot of freedom as writers but at the same time they have a lot of restrictions too. And one such restriction is to reflect the life truly or not going against the normal life.

Tolkāppiyar asks us to be careful in maintaining propriety of situations. For example, the hero is in the war field. This is an occasion in which the sentiment of heroism alone should be described. This cannot give room to the descriptions of love, either of the hero or of anybody. Therefore Tolkāppiyar has a special sūtra to say that in the war camp the hero should not be described as having any love-affair with the heroine. It is a well known fact that the war camp is most unsuited to such descriptions and such descriptions will not be relished by the readers.

There is another sūtra which follows this sūtra in which Tolkāppiyar sanctions love descriptions in the war camp. This gives difficulty to us. The word used by Tolkāppiyar in this sūtra is 'puṟattōr' which means outsiders. The sūtra is differently explained by the commentators. Iḷampūraṇar says that the hero is not allowed to have love in the war camp only with the heroine but he can have the love-affair with other girls. For the word 'puṟattōr', Iḷampūraṇar[8] gives the meaning 'other women'. But Nacciṉārkkiṉiyar

8. Ilam. Com. p. 314.

says that the lesser types of heroes can have love-affair in the war camp. 'Puṟattōr' according to him will mean 'other heroes'. Naccinārkkiṉiyar[9] seems to be correct because the description of love with reference to the hero in the war camp will spoil the taste. The lesser heroes can have it. The Sanskrit authorities too think that the rules of propriety are mostly for the important characters of literature. What is improper for the higher characters may become proper for the lesser characters. Tolkāppiyar would not have allowed such impropriety as explained by Iḷampūraṇar in his literature.[10]

Another impropriety which Tolkāppiyar wants the poets to avoid is the uncultured description of the heroine. In ancient Tamilnadu there existed a very peculiar custom of mounting the palmyra horse by the lover. This is known in Tamil 'maḍal ērudal'.[11] The hero, if he fails to win the heart of the lady, will prepare a horse made of palm leaves with their sharp edges. This horse will be placed in a prominent place of the street especially in the junction of the streets. The hero will have the name of the lady, whose love he failed to win, written on the horse. The hero will then mount the horse which will hurt him very severely and the elderly people of the area will try to make the girl give her consent to him. This type of forced love is called Peruntiṇai. Also if the lady-love's friend hesitates to arrange for the meeting of the lovers then

9. Nac. Com. p. 262.

10. An Introduction to Indian Poetics, p. 107.

11. For more details on this custom vide V. Sp. Manickam, op. cit. p. 141f.

the hero will threaten her that in case she does not co-operate he will mount the palmyra horse.

In the first case the hero is forcing the lady to love him, an act which nobody will normally approve of. In the second case the hero is merely threatening the friend. Sometimes the hero may resort to it really to force the parents of the girl, if they refuse to accept his unobjectionable request, to give their consent. It is not known whether such a custom existed in any region of India or the world. Tolkāppiyar allows the description of the hero as mounting the palmyra horse. But a heroine, if disappointed in her love, should not be described as mounting or threatening to mount the palmyra horse under any circumstances. If the girl is described as mounting the horse it will not be in tune with culture. Instead of enjoying the description the readers will detest this. So this is improper and is to be avoided.

Tolkāppiyar wants the writers to be extremely careful about the description of heroines. They should be described as passionate ladies but the descriptions should never exceed the limits. Whatever the heroines speak they should represent them as modest and cultured girls. They may exhibit their passion but they should always express it through suggestion and plain expression of their passion will be hated by the readers.

In love-quarrels the wife will be extremely angry with the husband for his misbehaviour with the concubines. In such circumstances the wife cannot be expected to be always submissive and modest. If she is described like that, it will be abnormal. In love

quarrels the wife has the right to argue with the husband; she may even scold him and make him wait at the gate. The husband is allowed to prostrate before the wife or touch the feet of the lady to pacify her. In these circumstances such acts of the husband and wife are considered to be well under etiquette. Under normal circumstances the wife is extremely sub-missive but what is improper there becomes proper in love-quarrels.

Similarly Tolkāppiyar prescribes certain norms to the characters. For example, the mother of the lady is mostly a reported character in literature. She should never be reported even as speaking to the lady-love or to the hero directly. All that the mother wants to speak to the hero or to the heroine will be spoken by the foster-mother. The foster-mother is moving very closely with the heroine and the heroine is more free with her and shares her secret with her. Even here she lets her mind out only through her friend. Tolkāppiyar says that the love-affair of the lady is to be conveyed to the father of the lady not directly but through the friend, the friend to the foster-mother, the foster-mother to the mother and the mother to the father. Such a formality is prescribed by Tolkāppiyar to save propriety.[12]

Similarly, Tolkāppiyar prescribes the norms for the interceders to speak to the characters.

We have seen before that Tolkāppiyar takes pains to describe the occasions which will suit the characters to speak. One may wonder that a great critic like

12. This is called in Tamil aṟottoḍuniṟṟal.

Tolkāppiyar need not have wasted his time in describing all these occasions. This may appear to be unwanted from a superficial point of view but on close examination we may find that Tolkāppiyar is very much concerned with propriety in literature while defining the occasions. The entire aham literature is full of such speeches and if the occasions are not defined the trend of literature will go unchecked. All his prescriptions on the theme, characters, sayings, etc. are to preserve the principle of propriety. Propriety is not only a delicate principle but also a very important theory. As Ānandavardhana cautions us, it is a principle that helps very much to the delineation of rasa. Any wrong committed in propriety will not only spoil the general trend of literature but it will murder the whole sweetness of literature.

We may now consider some observations made by Tolkāppiyar in the usage of simile. Whether Tolkāppiyar accepted the principle of simile as an ornament to poetry or anything, there is no doubt that he considers it to be a very essential principle to literature. Such an essential theory should not be allowed to spoil the general trend of literature. If the similes are wrongly or improperly used that will spoil the trend. If used correctly the simile gives enjoyment and if used incorrectly it harms literature.[13]

Tolkāppiyar says that uvamai aḍukku which means the arrangement of many upamās one after the other is to be avoided. If one object is compared to another, that object to another, that to another and so on it is

---

13. See further.

called uvamai aḍukku. When the face is compared to the lotus it is enjoyable because we know that the face is so pleasant and charming like the lotus. The face is comparatively unknown to us and we are making it known by comparing it with the lotus and making it to be as pleasant as the lotus. Here our purpose is served and we should be satisfied with this. If we then compare the lotus to the moon it is unnecessary and detesting.

We must not think that Tolkāppiyar is against the use of uvamai aḍukku only. He makes this statement to warn the poets to be very cautious in the usage of alaṁkāras like simile. Pērāśiriyar also says that we cannot give a list of objects which are fit to be alaṁkāras in literature. Just because the moon and the lotus are standard objects of comparison they cannot be used without discrimination. The use of alaṁkāras mainly rests with the skill of the writers and they can make anything an alaṁkāra. We have already seen that in the Śaṅgam literature even low animals like dog etc. have been used as upamās.[14] In fact it is not necessary that all literature should have alaṁkāras in them. Without the usage of alaṁkāras the literature may be enjoyable.

Perhaps it was one of the reasons why Tolkāppiyar did not engage himself very much in describing all the alaṁkāras even though we have every reason to believe that in his times many subtle alaṁkāras were in vogue as evidenced by the Śaṅgam literature. If a writer takes interest in the alaṁkāras he is psychologically

---

14. Pērā. Com. p. 108.

proned to thrust the alaṁkāras in all places. As Ānandavardhana says, the alaṁkāras should find a place in literature without the consciousness of the poet. Then only it becomes alaṁkāra. If the poet tries his best to employ alaṁkāras the poet loses his main trend and with the result the entire literature becomes dead.[15]

It is not a blemish to use the alaṁkāras in literature which is very enjoyable. But the limit should always be kept in mind. In Sanskrit the natural description, svabhāvokti is given the status of an alaṁkāra because it adds charm to literature. If we keep it in mind that all the alaṁkāras are other forms of simile we will never miss the use of alaṁkāras. If we think that upamā is only one variety of alaṁkāra and alaṁkāras are hundreds in number then we miss the point. That is the reason Tolkāppiyar never speaks about any other alaṁkāras. He even went to the extent of including the other alaṁkāras in upamā itself. The writer should be specially warned of the alaṁkāras because he is more likely to fall a prey to the misuse of the alaṁkāras than any of the other elements of literature. It is a very charming aspect of literature and caution should always be taken against such a naturally alluring element. And Tolkāppiyar has given the warning in a very beautiful manner.

Tolkāppiyar has another important rule of propriety. He says that the explicit or the implied upamā should not be used by the characters in a careless way. If the lady-love makes use of the

15. Ibid.

upamā the object described by her should be within the province of her knowledge. If the upamā is used by the lady-love's friend, the objects described should not belong to the region other than that of her own. If it is used by the lover it should be within the knowledge of his province. If the upamā is used by others there is no restriction to the region.

We may understand why should Tolkāppiyar make such restrictions regarding the use of upamā-alaṁkāras in general. The heroine is a lady who is not normally allowed to go out of her house and whatever knowledge she possesses is either acquired by her through her personal experience or by her association with others and in both the cases it will be very limited. But her friend is free to move out more freely than the heroine and she knows more objects than the heroine. The hero being a male has his freedom to move about very freely and this is true of others. So when the simile is put through the mouth of the characters the poet should be careful in discriminating the sphere and scope of knowledge in all these persons. In this connection we may quote Kālidāsa who makes use of simile very carefully always being conscious of the personality that speaks. If it is Kaṇva maharṣi who uses the simile, all his upamās centre round the forest, sacrifice, etc. The upamā is enjoyable only under the circumstances. It is very satisfying that Tolkāppiyar has formulated such rules regarding the alaṁkāras at a very early period.[16]

---

16. 'The sole consideration that it (alaṁkāra) is only a means to the delineation of sentiment and that is never an end in itself, the necessity of employing it at the right time and abandoning it at the right time, the absense of over-enthusiasm on the poet's part in pressing it too far and finally, his keen watchfulness in making

On close scruitiny one may be able to find more examples of propriety in Tolkāppiyam on the lines suggested above. What is more important is the fact that Tolkāppiyar has recognised the need for the presence of propriety or the absence of impropriety in literature. But it must be noted that like Bharata he never uses the word propriety and forms any theory as such. More than the usage of the word, the reference indirect or direct, to the concept of aucitya is essential and we have demonstrated that Tolkāppiyar speaks about the concept not unconsciously but knowingly as the underlying principle of literature.

The discovery of the technique of uḷḷuṟai itself is a pointed proof to Tolkāppiyar's acceptance of the theory of propriety. Why should the lady-love or the lady-love's friend use uḷḷuṟai mostly? It is because the lady and her friend are expected to preserve their limitations and modesty especially when they speak to the hero. They will never show that the hero is at fault. They will always use some symbolic concept to express their feeling. From the examples quoted in the chapter on suggestion one may find how politely the heroine and her friend express their feelings and emotions. The history of the idea of suggestion itself took its origin in order to preserve the propriety and the nicety of many literary conventions especially the characters.

In the ancient Tamil literature the usage of suggestion became an integral part because the entire aham

---

sure that it remains a secondary element only--these are the various means by which figures like Metaphor become accessories of suggested sentiment.' Ānandavardhana in Dhvanyāloka, II, 18-19.

literature had to be expressed through the speeches of the characters. In such a literature suggestion becomes very significant. Therefore we may not hesitate to accept the fact that Tolkāppiyar gives due prominence to the doctrine of propriety.

CHAPTER

8

Literary Techniques

One of the factors that bring success to literature is the way in which it is expressed. The writer has to choose proper words to express his ideas more clearly and words will have to be aiding bhāvas and rasas which are imminent in literature. The use of meyppāḍ-us and alaṁkāras like similes is also for helping the chief elements of literature. We have also seen earlier that the poet should be extremely careful regarding the rules of propriety. The regulations prescribed by the critics in regard to these aspects of literature can be held to be technical advices in a way.

Such regulations are common to Sanskrit and Tamil critics and in the works on literary criticism we very often come across these rules which help and guide the creative writers to achieve their goal in literature.[1] Apart from the technical advice of the above nature, sometimes the nature of a particular type of literature may warrant another pattern of guidance from the critics. We are

1. Ānandavardhana in his Dhvanyāloka gives many useful suggestions to the creative writers to make their writing more interesting and charming.

immediately concerned with such types of literary techniques in this chapter.

We have already remarked that in Sanskrit tradition the critics are more concerned with the prescriptions of rules regarding the theme, characters, etc. with regard to dramas only and they are not very much interested in guiding the creative writers as far as poetry and prose are concerned. We may not be able to find out the exact reasons for the conduct of the Sanskrit critics in this regard but the reason appears to be that the art of writing poetry and prose is not technically very difficult even though it may involve a special kind of literary genius. But the dramatic composition requires a special technical skill in addition to the general literary genius.[2] In poetry and prose the writer can bring in all the characters, incidents, emotions and situations more freely and the writer can express anything either in his words or through the characters. But in the drama the writer's freedom is restricted to a very great extent. All that the writer wishes to say have to be expressed only by the conversations which the characters have in the drama. Within the framework of these dialogues the descriptions of Nature, emotion, incident, etc. have to be arranged. As in the English dramas the Sanskrit tradition does not allow scenes within Acts. So the writer's difficulty is multiplied further. In order to make the writers get over these technical difficulties many technical advices are given to the dramatists in Sanskrit.

---

2. For an elaborate treatment of the various theories of Sanskrit drama see A. B. Keith, op. cit. Part III.

Let us see briefly some of techniques adopted by the playwrights in Sanskrit. We know that each Act must contain only such events as can naturally, or by skilful management, be made to occupy the duration of a limited time. There should be an effective development of the plot with in the Act. But at the same time all developments of the plot cannot be described or need not be described in the main trend of the Act. The events taking place between the intervals must also be informed to the audience for the understanding of the continuity of the story. In order to maintain the continuity and the interesting nature of the drama, a device is adopted in Sanskrit dramas. This is known as Viṣkambha or Viṣkambhaka. This is also known as Preveśaka but there is slight technical difference between the two. One of the chief differences is that the Viṣkambha may be used at the beginning of a drama to explain the past or the future whereas the Praveśaka cannot be used at the beginning of drama. Thus in the Śākuntala Act three is introduced by a Viṣkambha in which a young disciple of the sage Kaṇva informs the audience of the king's stay at the hermitage, while in Act six, Praveśaka gives the episode of the fishermen and the police. Thus, by these techniques the action is continued by the actors in the next Act without any break.

Another device adopted in Sanskrit is ākāśabhāṣita which means 'a voice in the air'. A voice from behind the scene known as nepathyokti is also of the same type. These techniques serve the purpose of avoiding the introduction of an additional character for speaking one dialogue in the whole of the drama. Another technique also may be noted here. Normally the actors speak aloud to be heard by those who are on the

stage and by the audience. If the writer wants to depict that the actor has something in mind, that cannot be described in a drama. In poetic composition this can be expressed by the poet in his words. Therefore the Sanskrit playwrights use a device called 'speaking to oneself' or 'speaking privately'. In these circumstances the actor would speak in a low voice but this could be heard by the audience but the co-actors should pretend not to hear it if need arises. There are many more devices in the Sanskrit drama and we may not mention all of them. What is more important for us here is that the nature of the dramatic composition compels the playwright to make his own devices for the successful expression of his ideas.

We will now come to the problem facing the early Tamil authorities. We have already remarked that according to ancient Tamil tradition the entire aham literature will be only in the form of speeches by the various characters. The puṟam themes can be expressed in the words of the poets. Some puṟam themes like the āṟṟuppaḍais will be in the form of speeches by a bard or poet who received donations from a rich man or king. But as far as the puṟam themes are concerned there is no restriction to the way of expression or to the handling of the theme. Thus in the āṟṟuppaḍais the poet who has enjoyed the patronage of a rich donar describes to a fellow-poet the way to the capital of the patron, the fivefold geographical divisions, the description of the city, the love of the patron, the royal feast, the reverential welcome and the glorious presents made by the patron. There is no restriction to the number of lines which the poems of this type should contain.[3]

3. For instance one of the āṟṟuppaḍais, Malaipaḍukaḍām, reaches the length of 582 lines.

So, the poet is at liberty to choose his own method of expression. Technically the puṟam poems are easy.

The aham poems cannot be like this. Tolkāppiyar has prescribed only a few characters in the kaḷavu and the kaṟpu themes. Even here, all the incidents and emotions will have to be expressed only in the form of speeches. There are restrictions to the situations in which the characters can take part and make their speech. Above all the characters should strictly maintain their limitations, dignity and modesty. To write aham poems keeping these restrictions in mind is no easy job for the poets.

The scope defined above explicitly keeps away the possibility of describing the Nature which is a very charming aspect of literature. The aham characters make their speech not with the intention of telling anything to the readers but to converse with the other characters or they make soliloquies to give expression to their emotions. Under the circumstances there is no scope for any description of Nature. But the ancient Tamil authorities have introduced a technique in which they could allot enough scope for Nature descriptions.[4]

In some of the illustrations which we cited in the chapters on simile, suggestion etc. one may notice that a way is found to accommodate Nature descriptions. The Nature is brought in not for the sake of Nature but to subserve the human emotions. The Nature also serves a unique purpose in the aham

---

4. For an exhaustive study of the Nature descriptions in the Ṣaṅgam literature see M. Varadarajan, The Treatment of Nature in Ṣaṅgam Literature.

poems. It helps the characters to maintain their modesty and limitations and at the same time it helps the characters to express all their inner feelings in a very effective and enjoyable manner.

The hero is unduly postponing the marriage and this causes embarrassment to the heroine and the lady-love's friend decides to indicate the urgency of the situation to the hero. But as a modest girl she cannot ask the hero directly. She knows that the hero will sometime overhear their secret speech. So, the lady-love's friend determines to make use of this conduct of the hero. One day she tells the heroine while the hero is overhearing them, that her mother is earnestly praying for the vēṅgai tree to blossom. It was a custom in ancient Tamilnadu to arrange for the marriages in the season in which the vēṅgai tree begins to bear flowers. It is also the time for the harvest of crops. By saying that the mother is praying for the vēngai tree to blossom the lady-love's friend suggests two things to the hero. One is that the marriage season is fast approaching and the other is that the harvest season is also approaching and after the harvest the lady will not be able to come out of her house under the pretext of watching the fields.[5] Thus the Nature description of the blossoming of the vēṅgai is brought in here. Many such examples may be found in the Śaṅgam literature. The Nature is given full scope and it is made to subordinate itself to the human emotions.

In another way also the Nature is used. The hero is returning from the house of the concubines. The

5. Ibid, p. 358-9.

heroine knows this and is very angry about it. She cannot scold her husband directly. So she says that the hero belongs to a village where there are many otters which enter the lotus tank, scatter the vallai creepers, seize the valai fishes amidst them, feed upon them and return to their rattan bush. By telling this she compares the hero to the otter, the concubines to valai fish, the vallai creepers to the concubines' parents and his own house to the rattan bush.[6] By this symbolic reference the heroine keeps herself within her modesty but makes the hero understand her contempt over his behaviour. There are many allegorical usages like this in the Śaṅgam literature. This type of allegorical usages gives enough scope to Nature descriptions and at the same time helps to preserve all conventions of the aham characters.

The speech-technic prescribed by the ancient Tamils creates another difficulty. In the form of speeches the emotions may be expressed by resorting to allegory or otherwise. But it may also be remembered that the aham poems even though they are isolated poems, are based on certain present and past incidents. Without incidents there is no much scope for human emotions. If incidents alone are narrated in the poems they will lose their charm. Therefore Tolkāppiyar allows the technique of flash-back. He says that the heroine while speaking to her lady-friend or to others can think of the past and narrate the events combined with her present emotions. This appears to be a very wise device to bring in narrations and emotions. If this system was not introduced the aham poets would

6. Ibid, p. 353.

have found it very difficult to combine the past events and the present emotions.

The events will occur in their natural order and will be reported to the readers later in the form of speeches by the characters. For this type of literature the flash-back system is not only convenient but very effective also. The suggestion to the poets will greatly easen their technical problems. In Śaṅgam literature we get such flash-back techniques and they are really enjoyable to read.

Another technique suggested by Tolkāppiyar is this : the heroine is now under constant watch by her relatives and she is not able to go out of the house and meet her lover. So her physical organs ematiate; her mind is very much troubled. She can say that she is feeling very much for her separation from her lover. But how long this alone can be the subject-matter of the poem. Some poems may describe this but if all the poems describe this only then the poetry will lose its appeal. So Tolkāppiyar suggests this way. The relatives of the heroine can prevent only her physical meeting with her lover but can they prevent her from meeting the hero in dream or in imagination ?

The poets can introduce a scene in which she can report her experiences that happened in her dream or in her imagination. Her imaginary meeting may be one-sided but the readers will be very much moved by this condition of the heroine. It will certainly create the desired sentiment in the mind of the readers.

Or other techniques may be adopted : The heroine can speak to any inanimate object imagining it to have the capacity to listen to her or reply her. She can

address the personified Suffering and ask it why do you trouble me? If she has nobody else she can ask her heart to come out and stand before her to answer all her questions. She can imagine what the reply would be and continue her conversation as long as she is not fed up with them. When her limbs change their colour due to separation from her lover she can as well ask her limbs why have you changed your colour? Her separation from her lover has caused many beauty spots on her body. These beauty spots have no capacity to eat. But she can artistically express that her body is swallowed by these beauty spots.

If she does not want to speak to her limbs, heart or imagination she has many other companions, says Tolkāppiyar. She can address any of the following: sun, moon, intelligence, shyness, sea, mirage, beast, tree, bird, etc. These are not inanimate objects. They will patiently hear what she says and reply her suitably. Tolkāppiyar suggests another technique also. As we see in our modern films, she can ask her emotion to go to her left side and ask her intellect to go to the other side. She can now ask them to relate their ideas and they may argue. She can finally choose one.

When the heroine places herself under all these circumstances it is natural that the readers are taking deep enjoyment over the techniques used by the writers. We may not say that the techniques are peculiar only to Tamil literature. Almost all standard writers have used these techniques in their writings. For example, Kālidāsa's hero Vikrama is speaking to all such objects. The hero of the Meghasandeśa is speaking to the cloud standing before him. Many more examples can be given like this. So one may

think that there is no speciality in Tolkāppiyar prescribing all these universal techniques.

We must remember one fact here. Now the techniques appear to be simple to us as we have come across many of them in several poems. But Tolkāppiyar belongs to a very early age where to imagine such literary techniques must have been a real feat. In suggesting the techniques Tolkāppiyar or ancient Tamil tradition has not only helped the writers of those times but they have left their mark of literary skill to us to be appreciated.

CHAPTER

9

The Theory of Rasa

It is a well known fact that the theory of rasa[1] is the most significant one in the world of Indian literary criticism. After Ānandavardhana demonstrated with effective arguments that the soul of poetry or any creative writing is the principle of dhvani which includes rasa, the entire Indian literary world could not but accept it. Although the father of the rasa theory is Bharata it was Ānandavardhana who placed it on the throne. The theory of rasa being of such importance no work on literary criticism will be deemed complete without a discussion on the concept of rasa. So, we have a duty to devote a few pages to discussing the doctrine of rasa as conceived by Tolkāppiyar. Before going to the material available with Tolkāppiyar it will be useful to give as usual a brief summary of the theory of rasa as found in the Sanskrit literary world.

As mentioned previously Bharata was the earliest known authority to mention about the rasa. We may not be wrong if we say that Bharata treats the principle of rasa incidentally and not primarily.

---

1. For some interesting discussions on the theory of rasa see K. Krishnamoorthy, Essays in Sanskrit Criticism (some relevant articles).

It is really strange that Bharata around whom the magnificent edifice of the principle of rasa has been built should treat this theory in a light manner. Perhaps Bharata will clearly stand witness to the fact that the ancient authorities cannot be expected to give any theory in a systematic way and they can only suggest the nucleus of any theory for the later authorities to develop it into a full-fledged system. Bharata suggested the basis of rasa theory, and it was subsequently developed by the later authorities. But unfortunately in Tamilnadu as the Śaṅgam tradition was broken, many excellent ideas suggested by Tolkāppiyar could not be pursued by the subsequent Tamil generations.

Bharata says that the rasa is accomplished as a result of the conjunction of vibhāva, anubhāva and Vyabhicāribhāva.[2] The conjunction of these excite the sthāyibhāva which flows out as rasa and after the intensity of the conjunction is weakened, it again stays as sthāyibhāva. Sthāyibhāva is called so because it is a permanent feature in all beings especially human beings.

After Bharata forwarded the rasa theory later authorities discussed it fully. We will consider the various views briefly. One of the chief problems for the ancient Sanskrit authorities was to form a theory as to how the rasa is enjoyed by the spectators.[3] Lollaṭa was an authority who contributed his view on this

---

2. P. V. Kane, History of Sanskrit Poetics, p. 15.

3. For an elaborate discussion on this subject see K. C. Pandey, Abhinavagupta. See also R. Gnoli, Aesthetic Experience according to Abhinavagupta. Also, Introduction to Indian Poetics.

problem. According to him[4] the various bhāvas mentioned above excite the dominant emotions (e. g. lòve) which the personalities like Rāma and Sīta have it generated in them originally. Then the actors with their power of action imitate the original heroes and heroines and obtain the rasa. This explanation of Lollaṭa is objectionable for the fact that it does not explain how the spectators obtain the rasa.

Śriśankuka tries to improve it. He says[5] that the emotions of the original personalities do not exist really in the actors but are inferred by the spectators to exist in them. The emotions thus inferred by the spectators subsequently develop into rasa anubhava. The theory tries to rectify the original defect which does not connect the rasa anubhava with the spectators. But the serious mistake in this theory is that the rasa anubhava can never be possible as a matter of inference. Inference is an intellectual process whereas rasa anubhava is purely an emotional factor.

Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka[6] tries to improve it further. He says that rasa anubhava is neither produced nor apprehended. The rasa anubhava is neither created by the original heroes nor is it by the actors. The literature, Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka says, has a peculiar threefold potency of its own, the power of denotation which deals with what is expressed, the power of realization which relates to the sentiment and the power of enjoyment which has relevance to the audience. From the threefold

4. For more details vide A. B. Keith, Sanskrit Drama, p. 315f. See also S. K. De, Sanskrit Poetics, p. 117f.

5. A. B. Keith, op. cit. p. 316. S. K. De, op. cit. p. 119.

6. A. B. Keith, op. cit. p. 316. S. K. De, op. cit. p. 123.

power of literature, audience are prepared to appreciate the rasa anubhava. The objection to the theory is that the power of realization and enjoyment ascribed to literature, cannot be established.

The view that got a universal approval from the critics was put forward by the school to which Abhinavaguta belonged. The theory adopted by this school is this:[7] As a result of the able and faithful performance of the actors the sentiment of the trained spectators is excited. The sentiment thus excited is something very different from the ordinary emotion. It is not peculiar to anyone. It is universal in nature and is common to all cultured spectators. It is also beyond all worldly emotions. It is for this reason even the karuṇa rasa or bībhatsa rasa is enjoyed by the audience when excited by the actors in the proper way. Thus the truth about rasa anubhava is that a dominant feeling or emotion becomes a sentiment when it is transformed into an object of enjoyment through the co-opreation of the vibhāva, anubhāva and vyabhicāri-bhāva. Thus enjoyment of the sentiment is not merely due to the actors but by the nature and experience of the spectators also. What really happens in the act of seeing a drama is that the spectator completely identifies himself with the original personalities who are depicted by the actors. Here the spectator does not consider the emotion as his own nor does he consider it as belonging to the original hero. In both the cases it either remains as a mere feeling which is far inferior to the sentiment or it becomes the individual feeling of the original actor which also cannot be

---

7. A. B. Keith, op. cit. p. 318. S. K. De. op. cit. p. 127f.

enjoyed by the spectator. The spectator gives up himself to the sentiment which unfolds its universal character and becomes an object of enjoyment.

In the light of the above theories we will now see whether Tolkāppiyar has any contribution of his own to the theory of rasa anubhava. Before we go to that question we have to demonstrate whether Tolkāppiyar has any reference to rasa theory. If we are asked to see whether the word rasa or its Tamil equivalent śuvai is found in Tolkāppiyam, we will return empty-handed. From this one must not judge that Tolkāppiyar has no knowledge of rasa or its anubhava. A deeper search is essential. Before we search for this fact in Tolkāppiyam we will consider another important factor which also has not been brought to light so far.

In the commentaries on Tolkāppiyam, reference is made to one Jeyiṟṟiyam,[8] a work on dramatic theories by one Jeyiṟṟiyanār called in Tamil Jeyiṟṟiyanār, which is known to have existed once. The date of the work cannot be ascertained clearly but because Iḷampūraṇar quotes from this it may be assigned to the 10th century A. D. The date is important because Jeyiṟṟiyanār seems to be a contemporary of Abhinavagupta. He may even be older than Abhinavagupta. This Jeyiṟṟiyanār seems to discuss about the theory of rasa anubhava. Unless we discover his work we cannot discuss the exact nature of rasa anubhava discussion held by Jeyiṟṟiyanār.[9] But what is important for us is that a similar discussion was going on in Tamilnadu

8. Ilam. Com. p. 360. Perā. Com. p. 2.

9. Only some stray verses are quoted by the Tamil commentators. From this no clear knowledge of his work can be obtained.

in the 10th century A D. perhaps as a continuation of earlier discussions by the Tamil scholars. It is really unfortunate that even Pērāśiriyar who is well versed in Sanskrit literature does not refer to the rasa anubhava theory in connection with his reference to Jeyiṟṟiyanār.

Pērāśiriyar does not seem to have understood the real meaning of Jeyiṟṟiyam passage which he quotes in some other context. This isolated line from Jeyiṟṟiyam says that the rasa happens on two grounds. Pērāśiriyar and Iḷampūraṇar explain this without any seriousness.[10] But to the present writer it appears that it refers to rasa anubhava. If that is established we can say that the Tamil scholars of ancient days had their own discussions on the problem. Perhaps some of the discussions might have influenced Sanskrit scholars of the time. We are not on solid ground here.

According to Jeyiṟṟiyanār the rasa anubhava is on two personalities which he mentions as two grounds. The question who or what they are cannot be answered well but the two referred to here may be the spectator and the original hero or the actor. If that is established that the spectator is involved in the rasa anubhava then the accepted theory of the Sanskrit scholars i. e. Abhinavagupta and others may be said to have arrived at in Tamilnadu befoie or at the time of Abhinavagupta. This is very important for the literary history of India.

---

10. Ilam. Com. p. 361. Perā. Com. p. 2.

Jeyiṟṟiyaṉār's reference to rasa theory proves that the subject was current in ancient Tamilnadu. So we will now see whether Tolkāppiyar has anything to say here.

Tolkāppiyar has a peculiar sūtra. We call it peculiar because it occurs in Poruḷ Iyal without having any relevance either to the previous sūtra or to the following sūtra. In fact it has no relevance to the chapter itself. The sūtra says(220): pleasure for all beings is in the region of the mind. No commentator, earlier or later, has understood the significance of this sūtra. Why should Tolkāppiyar have this sūtra? Evidently he has the theory of rasa in mind. He seems to say that the poetic or literary enjoyment is in the region of the mind of the readers or spectators and in the mind of the original personalities who are depicted in literature. As far as literature like poetry is concerned the pleasure is in the mind of the poet who transmits it through his poetry to the readers.

We may quote another sūtra of Tolkāppiyar in this connection. He says that in love themes no individual names should be cited(56). Only the common name of the hero of the region should be mentioned.[11] In Puṟam themes the individual names can be mentioned(57). What is the necessity for Tolkāppiyar or the ancient Tamil tradition to introduce this restriction? The ancient Tamils seem to know that if the individual names of the heroes and heroines are mentioned in the aham literature then the love becomes an individual feeling. The ancient Tamils seem to have known that unless the

11. V. Sp. Manickam, op. cit. p. 184ff. discusses this problem in some detail but he has evidently missed the central point in this concept. M. Varadarajan, P. F. C. T. S. vol, II p. 48 accepts the need for the principle of universalisation.

feeling is universalised and converted into a sentiment it cannot be enjoyed by the reader. We have already said that the individual identification is a hindrance to sentiment. This the ancient Tamils seem to have known long ago. As far as the puṟam themes are concerned the mention of individual names will not be blocking the way of universalisation. That is the peculiarity with the aham and puṟaṁ themes. These two references alone in Tolkāppiyam will amply prove that the ancient Tamils had a distinct view on rasa and its enjoyment. Perhaps Tolkāppiyar could not expand his view of rasa in Tolkāppiyam due to the fact that the nature of literature of his time did not warrant a detailed exposition of it.

We have already pointed out that the theme allowed by Tolkāppiyar was not to be developed as a continuous one which alone will give more and enough chance to the proper delineation of rasa. But this fact will not mean that they were ignorant of rasa. If the ancient Tamils had a long story for their theme of poetry the case would have been different.

In this connection we must remember why Ānandavardhana was forced to formulate a new theory of dhvani while the rasa theory was already existing. Can we say that he wanted to establish his name and so he did so? Great people will never do such things. Ānandavardhana enters the field of literary criticism with much hesitation. He says that the theory of dhvani was discovered long ago and all the ancient scholars knew about it. History knows that the theory of dhvani was discovered and propagated for the first time in the history of Sanskrit literature only by Ānandavardhana. Yet Ānandavardhana wants to give

all the credits to someone else. What a great mind he had !

Ānandavardhana's dhvani theory was necessitated by two very important reasons.[12] One is that before his time the rasa theory was confined to the drama field alone and Ānandavardhana wanted to apply it to the field of poetry too. Secondly, the theory of rasa is excellent but it cannot be applied as it is to poetry. If we take the Bharata sūtra this will be clear. Bharata says that the rasa is accomplished by the conjunction of the bhāvas like vibhāva etc. In a long poem there is chance to the description of the vibhāva etc. to accomplish rasa but where is the chance for all these in a small piece of poetry ? Even a small poetry is as charming as a long poem as far as its sweetness is concerned. Where does this sweetness lie in small poetry if rasa cannot be accommodated into it ?

This was the basic question before Ānandavardhana. He found out a reply to it soon. He discovered that the small poetry too contained all the aspects of the charm of rasa in a miniature form. This miniature or condensed rasa he called dhvani. Rasa may require a long poem to develop itself fully but dhvani can accommodate itself in any place. It can even be living in a particle of a word.[13] By condensing its form dhvani does not lose any of the qualities of rasa. So to say, it is a concentrated form of rasa. In a big poem it will expand itself into rasa and in a small poem it will contract itself to a miniature form.

---

12. For a clear and critical exposition of the dhvani theory see K. Krishnamoorthy, Dhvanyāloka and its Critics.

13. Dhvanyāloka, III, vritti under 16.

So where there is dhvani there is rasa. Accepting dhvani we cannot reject rasa or deny it. We have shown previously that Tolkāppiyar recognises the principle of dhvani and therefore we need not repeat that he recognises rasa also. Professor P. S. Subrahmanya Sastri says under the Tolkāppiyam sūtra which says 'the declaration coming from a series of superior experiences is also included under uḷḷuṟai' that this sūtra is a clear evidence to Tolkāppiyar's recognition of rasadhvani.[14] The ancient commentators of Tolkāppiyam do not connect Tolkāppiyam with the rasa conception. It was Professor Sastri who first showed this to the world. Professor Sastri seems to be correct in saying that this sūtra refers to rasadhvani. We have shown earlier that Tolkāppiyar certainly echoes the concept of dhvani long before Ānandavardhana. Therefore it is no wonder that he recognises rasadhvani also. Unlike Ānandavardhana Tolkāppiyar has no clear idea of the aspects of dhvani even though he recognises it.

Another important theory of rasa as held by Tolkāppiyar is to be noted here. In Sanskrit literary world the concept of aucitya was referred to without any relevance to rasa, before the time of Ānandavardhana. It was he who for the first time explained it with reference to the theory of rasa.[15] Tolkāppiyar, as the earlier Sanskrit authorities, cautions the writers to follow the principle of aucitya but he does not connect it with rasa. As Abhinavagupta points out

---

14. Tolkāppiyam translation, p. 133.

15. Introduction to Indian Poetics, p. 110ff.

clearly, there is no meaning in aucitya without rasa.[16] This proves that aucitya presupposes rasa and dhvani.

Aucitya may be a very important concept but it is not an end by itself. Nobody can enjoy a poetry just because it has propriety in it. If we raise the question: why should there be aucitya in poetry or for what we expect aucitya to be present in poetry, the problem will be clear. By the absence of aucitya we feel that something is lost in the poem. What is that 'something'? As we have remarked earlier more than the presence of aucitya we want impropriety to be absent from the poetry. These facts will clearly prove that aucitya is required not for its own sake but for something else in poetry. That something else is rasa or dhvani. That is why Abhinavagupta mentions that aucitya presupposes rasa and dhvani. He is perfectly correct.

We will now come to our problem. Tolkāppiyar wants aucitya in poetry or wants us to avoid impropriety. Applying our thesis we must say that by saying this, Tolkāppiyar presupposes rasa and dhvani. To be more clear, Tolkāppiyar recognises rasa and dhvani but unfortunately failed to connect them clearly with the principle of propriety. Tolkāppiyar's failure to do this may be due to this reason. In Tolkāppiyar's time the organic conception of poetry was not perhaps present. That is, they did not think that poetry was a whole having many parts like the mental qualities or physical limbs. That is why he never speaks about the problem of soul of

16. Ibid.

poetry. It may be remembered that Bharata who formulated the theory of rasa did not speak about its being the soul of poetry. Similarly Tolkāppiyar knows it subtly but does not elaborate it.

We will now come to another problem regarding rasa. Again we have to mention about Ānandavardhana. Ānandavardhana speaks in a detailed manner as to how the various rasas should be employed in poetry without spoiling the general trend of any of them.[17] In this connection we have to consider the number of rasas recognised by Tolkāppiyar. In his chapter on meyppāḍu Tolkāppiyar speaks about eight meyppāḍus but we are unable to decide whether he means the eight rasas or merely the eight sthāyibhāvas. Whatever it may be, mention of bhāvas presupposes rasas. As we have already noted, it is the sthāyibhāva that becomes rasa being excited by the other bhāvas. So recognition of meyppāḍus means recognition of rasas. Also Tolkāppiyar, as we noted previously, says that the pleasure for all beings is in the region of the mind. This shows that he knows about a principle similar to that of the sthāyibhāvas.

The eight rasas or sthāyibhāvas are the usual eight rasas recognised by the earlier Sanskrit tradition.

---

17. Some important hints given by Ānandavardhana may be noted here. (a) When any single sentiment like the Erotic happens to be the principal in a work, no other sentiment, whether unopposed, should be treated fully at the same time. (b) Even an unopposed sentiment should not be given importance greater than that of the principal sentiment. (c) Passing moods which are opposed to the principal sentiment should not be described at length, and if described at all, there should be an immediate reversion to the passing moods of the principal sentiment. (d) If Quietude is the principal sentiment, the Erotic should be lesser in importance; so also, if the Erotic is the principal sentiment, Quietude itself should be the lesser in importance. (Dhvanyāloka, III,24ff.)

Bharata mentions only eight rasas and Kālidāsa also supports it. It was Ānandavardhana who for the first time gave full recognition to the ninth rasa, śānta.[18] In Sanskrit it is a big controversy to recognise śānta rasa.[19] Tolkāppiyar also does not mention it explicitly. But a remark by Pērāśiriyar is very interesting here.[20] He says that the rasas are nine with raudra. He quotes an old work in support of this. This shows that the problem of śānta rasa was engaging the attention of the ancient Tamils. Iḷampūraṇar also mentions about this.[21] So the existence of the problem of śānta rasa must be older to Iḷampūraṇar. We do not know whether it had any effect on the Sanskrit authorities. Both Iḷampūraṇar and Pērāśiriyar reject the scope of śānta rasa in literature saying it has more concern with the saintly people and it will not suit literature. Can we say that Tolkāppiyar also ignores śānta rasa because it is not suitable to literature? As usual the answer cannot be sought from Tolkāppiyar directly. We may have to go to his other sūtras to know this.

Like Ānandavardhana Tolkāppiyar does not have any sūtras to point out how the various rasas can be employed in literature side by side. But from his description of the puṟam themes we have to assume for ourselves the mind of Tolkāppiyar. In the puṟam themes he wants us to describe the war from the lifting of the cows. Then the battle gets heated and

18. Dhvanyāloka, IV, vṛtti under 5.

19. For details see V. Raghavan, Number of Rasas. See also P. V. Kane, History of Sanskrit Poetics, p. 366ff.

20. Pērā. Com. p. 5.

21. Ilam. Com. 360.

a terrible war goes on in and around the fort. This is purely a heroic theme in which only the vīra rasa has scope. But Tolkāppiyar wants us to combine it with the other rasas also. In the vetci tiṇai itself he wants us to describe the pleasure party of the soldiers with food, drink and dance. Here Tolkāppiyar wants us to combine the heroic sentiment with the other sentiments. He also says that the soldiers are to be described as giving away the cows to the needy. This is almost a rasa nearing śānta rasa. Thus Tolkāppiyar gives scope to combine vīra with hāsya and śānta rasas.

In the vetci, Tolkāppiyar allows the following descriptions also: dance under the possession of Skanda by a priest who is an adept in it; a kind of dance called vāḍā valli; a dance by the soldiers in praise of the co-soldiers; songs in praise of some gods; a kind of song called piḷḷai yāṭṭu for sending the fallen soldiers to heaven. These show that Tolkāppiyar believes in the combination of other rasas with vīra.

In vañci he allows the description of the large provisions of food which the army has and the honour and presents offered to some. In Uḻiñai, he wants us to describe the riches of the besieged king. In Vāhai he allows the description of the brahmins. Here also he wants us to describe the moral ideas, the assembly of the great, the feeling of equipoise. In Kāñci, the description of various rasas is allowed by him.

All these clearly show that Tolkāppiyar believes in the combination of various rasas. Also his allowing the description of the cremation ground etc. clearly shows that he recognises the importance of śānta rasa.

But he does not mention the śānta rasa in his list of eight rasas perhaps for the fact that he considers śānta to be superior rasa as Ānandavardhana holds. Śānta is not the ninth rasa nor is it unfit to be described in literature. It is *the* rasa and rasa of the rasas.[22] How wonderful it is to see that Tolkāppiyar recognises many such important ideas 1200 years before Ānandavardhana.

As Tolkāppiyar gives scope to vīra rasa in the puṟam theme and makes other rasas subordinate to it, in the aham theme Tolkāppiyar gives enough scope to many rasas and many dhvanies. If we observe his arrangement of the love theme as evidenced by the aham poems of the Śaṅgam period we will notice that a full śṛṅgāra kāvya is hidden together with all its necessary accessories in the gem-like independent poems which are full of dhvani and which are capable of being a long love poem if we rearrange them in a required order. This type of beauty is never to be seen in any literature. Tolkāppiyar silently makes ample provision in his scheme of literature to all the necessary aspects without formulating dry theories on any of them. Tolkāppiyar is really a genius, finest literary authority about whom the entire India should be really proud of.

22. Ānandavardhana rightly remarks in this connection: "In polished literary circles it has indeed become a convention to communicate their best ideas only through suggestion and not at all by express words" (Dhvanyāloka, IV, vṛtti under 5). Tolkāppiyar too suggests the supreme nature of the Śānta rasa by means of suggestion and not by expressed statements.

CHAPTER

10

Concluding Remarks

In the previous chapters we have had occasions to remark that Tolkāppiyar may not be familiar with the the organic conception of poetry. But when we come to observe some of his remarks in his chapter on prosody, it becomes necessary to re-examine our view. In the chapter on prosody which is mainly dealing with the metrical rules to be observed in composing the poems, Tolkāppiyar incidentally makes mention of many varieties of literature. All the varieties may not be noted here but some relevant types may be pointed out here. In the sūtra 468 he mentions some of them as nūl, urai, etc. He elaborates what nūl is in the following sūtra (469). According to this sūtra nūl is that wherein a topic is dealt with from beginning to end without contradiction, sometimes concisely and sometimes in detail full of suggestions. He further says (471) that nūl consists of sūtras dealing with one idea, ōttu (chapter) dealing with one minor topic, paḍalam (section) dealing with one major topic and piṇḍam consisting of all or any of the three mentioned above. He also says (473) that ōttu is the collection of sūtras dealing with the topic in a beautiful order like gems of the same kind in a garland. Paḍalam is (474) a section of a major topic which consists of chapters dealing with diverse topics

under the same. In the sūtras 416 to 420 Tolkāppiyar speaks about the varieties of prayers to be prefixed to the poems.

Combined with these sūtras we may have to read the 310th sūtra in which Tolkāppiyar mentions about 27 limbs of poetry.[1] All the 27 limbs may not be of very importance to us here but two limbs namely nōkku and vaṉappu are of great significance to us. The word nōkku occurs in the sūtra 310 as referring to one of the limbs of poetry and is explained as the element which helps to view all the limbs of poetry as integral parts of poetry (410). If this explanation is accepted then nōkku should be held to be not a mere limb but as the most significant limb of poetry. The word vaṉappu does not occur in the sūtra 310, nor does it occur in the reading of Iḷampūraṇar. Pērāśiriyar has it in his sūtra 547 and explains the word as the aggregate beauty of all the limbs of poetry.[2] It cannot be decided whether Tolkāppiyar had this word vaṉappu in his original text but if he had the word in the same meaning in which Pērāśiriyar explains it, then it becomes an important idea.

Tolkāppiyar's reference to poetry having many limbs and an aggregate beauty is bound to make us think that he is familiar with the organic conception of poetry. In fact Professor T. P. Meenakshisundaran

1. Tolkāppiyar actually mentions 26 plus 8 limbs of poetry. But according to the commentators (Ilam. Com. p. 420; Pērā. Com. 116) the first 26 are very essential to poetry and the remaining 8 are not so important.

2. According to P. S. S. Sastry (Tolkāppiyam translation p. 72) the first line of this sūtra (536) in which Pērāśiriyar reads the word vaṉappu (in Pērā. Com. the sūtra number is 547) may be an interpolation.

thinks[3] that Tolkāppiyar knows this. If we read the remarks of Tolkāppiyar which he advocates in the chapter on prosody, without any comparison with the ideas expressed by him in the other chapters of Tolkāppiyam we may have to accept that Tolkāppiyar is familiar with the organic conception of poetry. The organic conception becomes meaningful only in relation to a long and continuous poem.[4] But it is evident that neither Tolkāppiyar nor the Śaṅgam poets have any familiarity with the epic or mahākāvya type of poems. Anyway, Tolkāppiyar's remarks in the chapter on prosody are worth noting and considering. But on the basis of his remarks in the chapter on prosody it is highly doubtful whether we can explain that Tolkāppiyar conceives of a full-fledged long poem. Had he taken a serious view of the organic conception of poetry he would not have prescribed rules to compose poems based on kūṟṟus or speeches by the characters. Neither the aham poems nor the puṟam poems as prescribed by Tolkāppiyar and as followed by the Śaṅgam poets have any scope for organic conception.

At the same time it should be pointed out that the organic conception is to be differentiated from the theory which speaks about the essential and harmonious elements of poetry. Tolkāppiyar in his chapter on

---

3. Vide Collected Papers of Prof. T. P. Meenakshisundaran, pp. 55-63. Prof. T.P.M. almost repeats this article in P. F. C. T. S. Vol II, p.3ff.

4. It is true that we are speaking of a soul namely the dhvani in regard to small pieces of poetry and thereby we indirectly accept organic conception even in small poems. In that case the isolated poems as prescribed by Tolkāppiyar and as followed by the Śaṅgam poets which contain the elements of suggestion may be said to make room for the organic conception. Anyway, the organic conception becomes more pronounced only in the long poems.

prosody is really concerned with the latter and not with the former. If he had really viewed poetry as a full-fledged organism then he would not have failed to connect the various aspects of literature with the 'soul' of poetry. But as it has been pointed out repeatedly in the previous chapters, Tolkāppiyar has at the bottom of his heart the organic conception. That is why he unconsciously speaks about the limb nōkku which crudely presupposes the theory of organism. If Tolkāppiyar had the word vaṉappu in his sūtra as conceived by Pērāśiriyar then it is a remarkable point. Vaṉappu is an essential aspect of poetry and not a mere element of poetry. It is really the result of the harmonious blending of the various limbs of poetry. It is to be pointed out here that Ānandavardhana explains this aspect of poetry by using the word 'lāvaṇya' in the 4th kārikā of the first Flash of his Dhvanyāloka. Vaṉappu is the natural outcome of the proportionate blending of the various essential limbs of poetry and nōkku is the element which gives us the scope to enjoy the vaṉappu. These two conceptions are really wonderful contributions of Tolkāppiyar in the early period.

Before concluding this book it is necessary to point out another important remark made by Tolkāppiyar. In his Poruḷadhikāram he has formulated many literary theories but he warns us (546) that we should not think that what he has prescribed alone should be followed in literature. The standard poets may have many more elements which should not be condemned just because they are not found in the prescriptions of Tolkāppiyar. So, he says that it is the duty of the clear-visioned scholars that if they find

in literature anything not mentioned in the foregoing sūtras, they should also be admitted in the fold of the above. This remark of Tokāppiyar is a very clear proof of his correct attitude towards literary criticism. The critics should never think that they are the masters of the creative writers or the readers. They are only helping the poets and the readers to write and appreciate literature. They can never control either the poets or the readers. It is really encouraging to see such a polite attitude in such a great literary authority.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

[Works cited in this book]

Tamil

Aravindan, M. V. : Uraiyasiriyargal
Arunacalam, M. : Tamil Ilakkiya Varalaru [11th and 13th centuries]
Dandiyalamkaram
Kambaramayanam
Kuvalayanandam
Maranalamkaram
Pannirupadalam
Poruladhikaram [with the commentaries of Ilam-puranar, Perasiriyar and Naccinarkkiniyar]
Raghava Iyangar, M. : Tolkappiya Poruladhikara Araychi
Rajamanikkam, M. : Pattuppattu Araychi
—— Tamil Moli Ilakkiya Varalaru
Sangam Poetry [Ettuttokai and Pattupattu]
Silappadhikaram
Vaiyapuri Pillai, S. : Tamil Cudar Manigal
—— Tamil Ilakkiya Saritattil Kaviya Kalam
Varadarajan, M. : Tamil Ilakkiya Varalaru
Vellaivaranan, K. : History of Tamil Literature : Tolkappiyam
Virasoliyam
Yapparungalam

Sanskrit

Alamkarasarasamgraha [Udbhata]
Citramimamsa [Appaya Diksita]
Dhvanyaloka [Anandavardhana with Locana]
Kavyadarsa [Dandin]
Kavyalamkara [Bhamaha]
Kavyalamkarasutra [Vamana]
Kuvalayananda [Appaya Diksita]
Meghasandesa [Kalidasa]
Mrcchakatika [Sudraka]
Natya Sastra [Bharata]
Sakuntala [Kalidasa]
Srngara sataka [Bhartrhari]

Vakrokti Jivita [Kuntaka]
Vikramorvasiya [Kalidasa]

English

Adya Rangacharya, : Introduction to Bharata's Natya Sastra
De, S. K. : History of Sanskrit Poetics
Dwivedi, R. C. [Ed.] : Principles of Literary Criticism in Sanskrit
Gnoli, R. : Aesthetic Experience According to Abhinavagupta
Kane, P. V. : History of Sanskrit Poetics
Keith, A. B. : Sanskrit Drama
Krishnamoorthy, K. : Dhvanyaloka and its Critics
—— Dhvanyaloka Translation
—— Essays in Sanskrit Criticism
Manickam, V. Sp. : The Tamil Concept of Love
Meenakshisundaran, T. P. : Collected Papers
—— A History of Tamil Language
—— A History of Tamil Literature
Nilakantha Sastry, K. A. : The Sangam Age
Pandey, K. C. : Abhinavagupta
Proceedings of the First International Conference Seminar of Tamil Studies. Vol II
Raghavan, V. : The Number of Rasas
Raghavan, V. and Nagendra [Ed.] An Introduction to Indian Poetics
Subrahmanian, N. : History of Tamil Nad
—— Sangam Polity
Subrahmanya Sastry, P. S. : Tolkappiyam Poruladhikaram Translation
Varadarajan, M. : The Treatment of Nature in Sangam Literature
Vijayavardhana, G. : Outlines of Sanskrit Poetics
Winternitz, M. [Translated by Mrs. S. Ketkar] : A History of Indian Literature

Papers

Sundaramoorthy, G. : Age of Paripadal as Revealed by its Visnu Mythology
—— Influence of Sanskrit on the Sangam Age

INDEX